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HENRY DEXTER



Henry Dyster

HENRY DEXTER

Sculptor

A MEMORIAL

BY

JOHN ALBEE

WISCONSIN
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

PRIVATELY PRINTED

1898

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INTRODUCTION



THERE are ample materials in my hands for illustrating the career of Henry Dexter from his childhood to his death; and as I propose to let him be his own biographer wherever possible, I will once for all enumerate the sources from which this memorial is composed. For the first thirty years of his life there is a full autobiography of two hundred and five closely written quarto pages; and for the remainder of his life there is a variety of miscellaneous information contained in his own letters and diaries, in the public notices of the painter and sculptor (for he was both), and in the recollections of his family and friends. As I was myself one of the latter, and at the ever-memorable period of impressionable youth when art and artists and poetry were all the world that had any interest for me, I shall have a twofold pleasure in writing of a man whom I admired and loved, and at the same time recovering the free and aspiring period of my intimacy with him.

But I have not completed the inventory of resources for this memorial, those which made the closest bond between us, but which unfortunately are for the most part in such an unfinished state that I shall be unable to use them directly. These are many hundred pages of metaphysical

speculations, observations on modern science and its meaning, and a considerable volume of poetry, most of which has never been printed. These precious pages contain the record of his hidden life, of his deepest mind; and though I shall not be able to introduce them bodily into this narrative, I trust their light will incidentally shine through it, revealing, as mere outward events cannot, the real and most inward spirit of the man. Artists are seldom only artists; they are also philosophers, inventors, writers, and nearly always poets. These are their holiday guises between orders, or when the arm and the eye are weary. Mr. Dexter wrote almost as much as he wrought with chisel. But curiously enough in one who had been an extraordinarily skilful artisan from his earliest years, and before he was an artist, he lacked the constructive literary faculty. Form, which he commanded out of a block of marble, he could not so well command on paper and with pen.

We had not been long acquainted when I discovered that his portfolio was full of verses. He was so much my senior that it was with great trepidation that I ventured to confide to him my own attempts in the same kind. Thereafter—what shall I say?—we inscribed poems to each other, and some of them were printed in the local Cambridge newspaper. What they meant was probably an enigma to readers, if there were any; but that mattered not at all to us. *We* read them, and carried under our cloaks the delightful and sacred mystery. Thus his inner nature and aspiration became known to me; and though, as I have said, he was much my senior and had long before made his place in the world, he was really much younger

in feeling than I, overburdened with youth's melancholy, ambitions and hesitations. He had passed through the same experiences, and was at the time in the serene and confident period of his life, when he could look backward with satisfaction and hopefully forward. He had conquered his way, every step of which had been a battle with circumstances as untoward as ever fell to the lot of a New England boy, yet there was throughout one propitious omen: he had always been conscious of what he wanted to do and to be; never lost sight of it, never forfeited it by trifling with fortune, was never much tempted to escape into an easier path for the attainment of worldly comforts and the soft bed that money makes. He wanted to be an artist before he had ever seen a picture or a statue. Some undefined and unaccountable impulse drew him that way, and when for the first time he chanced to see a painting, his whole nature and inclination were in a flash revealed and explained to him. Thenceforth he had only to struggle into the fulness of that light which had been shown to him; a long, arduous way yet to go, but one from which he never flinched. At the period when I knew him the struggle was over, as nearly as may be with artists and poets. Art and poetry are mansions of many rooms; once admitted, their votaries are still trying new doors, with longings not exactly like their early struggles, yet never letting them rest. At this time, also, Mr. Dexter, who was deeply interested in the current problems of science and religion, had outlined certain theories in regard to the evolution of matter and spirit, their relation, their history and destiny, which very well contented him. In short, he was then at peace with himself, and thought that he had penetrated as far

into the mystery of creation as was permitted to man. He was cheerful and even playful at this time, as many of his letters and verses testify.

I thought, therefore, that it was best to begin the annals of his life from this eminence where I first knew him intimately and had the most distinct impressions of the man ; and with this lamp recover the previous years, some fifty in number, and by the same light the remaining twenty.

This narrative will begin at his birth and trace his history, keeping close to his own manuscript, for thirty years. I regret that the limits of this book will not allow the printing of his autobiography in full ; but it must necessarily be condensed to make room for other important periods of his life. I regret it the more because his own narrative is his best piece of writing, flowing on in a leisurely, natural manner, and because also it is one of the most vivid and picturesque descriptions of the customs, ideas and oddities of country communities in New York and New England during the first part of the nineteenth century with which I am acquainted. But I hope to be able to introduce enough to show the flavor of his account, and to illustrate out of what soil he grew, amid what seeming obstructions and narrowest world this boy of genius felt the intimations of his destiny and his life's work.

MEMOIR



I

BOYHOOD — APPRENTICESHIP

HENRY DEXTER was born, October 11, 1806, in the town of Nelson, Madison County, New York, the third of five children. His descent has been traced back through eight generations to the Rev. Gregory Dexter, of Olney, Northampton County, England, born 1610. This Gregory Dexter was first a printer and stationer in London; an adherent and transatlantic correspondent of Roger Williams. He printed for Roger Williams, in 1643, a dictionary of the Indian language as spoken in New England. In 1644 he accompanied Williams on one of his return trips to Providence, where he became a regular preacher among the Baptists, baptizing many people in the Providence Jordan, otherwise called the Mooshassick. Let us think of him rather as the first educated printer in the country, often called to Boston and Cambridge to assist in setting up matter too difficult for the local journeymen, and as the printer of the first Rhode Island almanac. He and all his descendants lived in and around Providence up to the close of the eighteenth century, when they began to disperse, — some going as far west as Connecticut and even New York; others to the far south, to North Carolina and Alabama.

The father of our Henry went to New York in 1805 to better his fortune, in which attempt he failed after various efforts at farming, shoemaking and tanning. From the time of this removal to New York the family history is not pleasant to read. It is a record of trials in which the mother and her children appear to have been the chief sufferers. Not a vestige remains of their humble home, though twice built, and even the site of it is known only through tradition. So I will not attempt its discovery nor uncover its pathetic annals, but confine myself to such memories of the child Henry as are most significant and entertaining. These memories date from the time when he was a child in arms, — which I can well believe, for he was one of the most sensitive men I ever knew. Nothing escaped his acute senses, and his memory had not been overlaid by book training. In his autobiography he thus beautifully begins the story of his first conscious awakening to the objective world: "The commencement of life's career is such an every-day occurrence that it seems nothing to speak of; but the train of associations that converge to this little point are as the strings of the harp to the point to which they are gathered, — they are touched and they sound. Circumstances play upon them, and we feel the vibrations in the soul."

He even thought that he had an ante-natal memory of one small household occurrence. But as his mother disputed the possibility of such a thing, he does not insist upon it. His father had found a quantity of wild honey in the forest some little while before his birth, and Henry thought he remembered seeing the five brass kitchen kettles filled with it and tasting it. What an omen had he

been born to be a poet! At any rate, it is a poor childhood about which some mist or myth does not gather. He did remember beyond dispute the cutting of the string under his tongue, being born tongue-tied. This must have been in the first or second year of his babyhood. Such trifles as being carried in his father's arms to the cornfield where crows were thieving the newly planted kernels, or stepping on a hot shovel and being comforted in somebody's arms, seeing his mother milk the cow in winter and observing icicles hanging from the under lip of the cow, sitting in his father's lap and noticing how much larger his father's hand was than his own and wondering when he should have more fingers and thumbs, supposing those made the difference in size, — these and numerous other insignificant incidents made up the gossamer threads of his dawn of life, which later and more eventful years never dissipated, but rather bound together and made brighter and stronger. Even childhood's griefs become tinged in the memory of them with something akin to pleasure. We make poetry of past sufferings, and write of them in the same chapter and with equal delight as our past joys. Country life is full of events to children, and the boy Henry was astonished by soldiers uniformed in red coats passing the house to the muster-field; excited to the highest pitch when the family moved into a new house, and greatly confused by a funeral and the sight of the dead neighbor, whose face he was lifted up to see. It was not too late to see frequent parties of painted Indians about that part of New York, and Henry's father kept his gun loaded in fear of night attacks.

The date of his first schooling is not given, but he

records that he learned three letters the first day and received from his teacher "a ticket of merit." For the remainder of that day at school he amused himself with marking on white paper with a carpenter's plummet of lead. This was before the day of the spirit-level, and the lead plummet, in shape like a top, was in use for getting a perpendicular or plumb line; hence the name. It was also before the day of lead-pencils, which were perfected in this country in 1823 by the father of Henry D. Thoreau. Having learned his letters, the mystery of words next confronted him. He mentions one, "pews," which puzzled him, never having been in a meeting-house. He was much troubled when his sister told him it was wicked not to stand up when one day an itinerant minister asked a blessing at his father's table; and in contrast he mentions that nothing in all his life gave him such delight as when he heard a negro play the fiddle; thereupon he set to work to make a fiddle, and in three days he succeeded. But to play upon it was thought to be sinful. At this period of his childhood he saw his first apple, and told his first lie, which cost him a whipping and cured him forever, he avers. Poor boy! he saw a knife lying about, knew it was his father's, but somehow it got into his pocket, and it seemed so good he kept it there several days, except when he found some place where he could whittle unobserved. When discovered, he had to invent several good round whoppers to account for his possession of the knife. Nobody but a New England country-bred man knows the value of a jackknife to a boy. We had no toys, no picture-books, no playthings save what we made, no Christmas presents; and a new pair of boots once a

year gave us more joy and more pride than Santa Claus' well-filled chariot now brings to the pampered modern child. Consequently invention and observation were ever on the alert to find something to play with. I well remember what comfort the red claw of a lobster and a piece of shiny anthracite coal furnished me for seven weeks. In his sister Ann, two years older than himself, Henry had one playmate who kept his life from entire dreariness. With her, he says, the happiest hours of his childhood were spent. His next allusion to school days is at a time when he had learned to read a little and when Webster's spelling-book was the chief study. In this he read sentences from the Bible printed at the top and bottom of the pages of words which he could not understand, and remembered simply because they were mysterious. At length he learned to count as far as one hundred and could recite the multiplication table. But school and books formed only a minute item in the life of country children of that time; they began very early to bear the yoke of labor. In his father's tanyard Henry drove the horse that turned the stones for grinding bark. His chief early employments, however, were helping his mother spin and weave. She had the large wheel for woollen yarns and the small for flax, and Henry had to wind quills and spool yarn for many a web and woof. His mother was expert in all old-fashioned industries, and was ambitious to possess her own sheep and raise her own flax. Alas, the husband said, "Nay; we will sell the farm, make shoes and tan leather, and fill the bag with cash." Accordingly the farm was sold, with remonstrances and tears and the bribe of a new cap for the wife by the purchaser if she

would sign the deed. The said cap remained an heirloom in the family for a long time. Meanwhile the lad of seven was his mother's assistant and confidant. He continued to wind spools, to do chores, to run on errands, and to have little time for play. He had never seen a book except his speller and reader, and perchance a cheap Bible. At length he did become possessed of a picture-book, and in some way a few volumes got into the house. Among them was Chesterfield's Letters, which had at the beginning of the chapters illuminated initial letters; and here — at what age is not clear, but he must have been still a child — occurs the first sign of the talent with which he had been born. With a pewter pencil he tried to imitate these letters. For coloring he gathered pigeon berries, green and red, and, expressing the juice, endeavored to obtain effects upon his drawing. The next pictures he chanced upon were in a great illustrated Bible belonging to a neighbor. His delight, he records, knew no bounds; and he mentions those which particularly impressed him, — Adam and Eve, Samson lifting the gates of Gaza, and others. But these were as nothing in comparison with two portraits he saw hanging in the best room of this neighbor's house. While looking at them the question came to him how such things could be done, and the sigh rose in his little heart, the sigh to do such things himself. Then follows what he describes as an unhappy enthusiasm, hope that he might, fear and sorrow lest he could not. Surely such feelings are a prophecy in a small boy. He hastened home to his mother and told her all he had felt. She listened; she explained to the child that painters must have a natural gift and that he must not

think of such things. The docile boy heard and obeyed, and now found two ways he must not go, — to the fiddle and the picture. To wind quills, dig potatoes, wash dishes, and go on errands was what he was made for. Soon another forbidden way was discovered. The family horse died, and he happened to be alone with it at the time. He made a verse upon the occasion, imitating some phrase of a hymn, the only poetry he had ever heard, and confided it to his mother. She reprimanded him, telling him dumb beasts were not entitled to such solemn words, and, moreover, that poets were always poor shiftless fellows. Thus his childish efforts at self-expression through music, drawing and poetry were discountenanced by the only being in whom he wholly trusted. He was seven years old when his dawning intelligence had manifested itself in such unusual directions and had been prematurely checked. There remained one other passion, not so easily thwarted, and in fact oftener smiled upon by mothers and all of her sex. It is boy love, that curious and ineffectual development of boyhood which compels it to a propensity for girls much older than itself. Henry had that common experience, with its usual results. But, alas, his first loved one, the daughter of a tavern-keeper, soon moved away to another place called the Lake, — mysterious word that he had heard, but whose equivalent he did not yet know; "river" also he had heard, and he knew that both designated water; and as "river" was the longer word, he supposed it the name of a larger sheet of water, yet he cared less for it than Lake, as that was where the loved one dwelt. He dreamed much of water at this period, water with no bottom, and soon found

that neither the Lake nor his love was bottomless. By dint of much coaxing he got himself carried to the Lake, where he saw not only that and a river for the first time, as well as a painted house, but his love for the last time. He found another maid on whom to bestow his heart; and again it was the daughter of a tavern-keeper, who in earlier days was a superior being to the children of the farmers. Henry's frequenting of taverns was a part of the rustic education of his boyhood. There were not only the daughters of the house, but assemblies of the neighbors and travellers; and all the balls and shows were held in the building, which generally contained a hall for such purposes. There the boy heard many questions discussed while the disputants heated the flip irons which made the cider boil and foam; there he once saw at some entertainment the representation of a Sleeping Beauty that again awoke in him the same emotion as the portraits on the wall. The speech which he heard at these taverns was not that of his home, nor was it probably very refined or guarded. It was strong, graphic, and perfectly spontaneous; moreover it was characteristic. Nobody thought of being like another, and individuality was, and continues to be, the chief charm of country taverns, stores, and town meetings. The silent boy took note of all this, and measured it by such lights as he had.

From an older brother he learned the secrets of trapping, fishing, and shooting; or rather (for he was not much inclined to these sports), he became familiar with the brooks and forest ways of the region. Forests were everywhere as yet uncleared, and when he found any spot where he could see beyond them, it appeared to him that

the world — a word he heard often and that perplexed him much — must be there. From his mother he heard the superstitions of the region. She herself believed in them; and even then days were fixed for the destruction of the world. One of the anticipated methods of this destruction was a novelty among the prophets: the world was to be sunk by hailstones on a certain day. All that day Mrs. Dexter kept her family indoors. But Henry stole out and hid himself in an empty hogshead to witness the expected catastrophe. His mother was also a great story-teller; some of the stories she related, others she sang. Henry liked best those that were told without the music; and used to get her to recite the songs, so that he could understand them better. This was an early example of his life-long habit of seeking for an exact understanding concerning whatever interested him.

There came a time when he earned his first quarter of a dollar, with which the dutiful child bought a bowl for his mother; saw his first wedding, whose ceremonies did not equal his imagination of them; saw his father baptized, and learned to walk on his head! At nine years of age he began to be a little vain, and wet his hair to make it stand up straight from his forehead, after the fashion of elder boys and men, who used pomatum and bear's grease to produce this extraordinary effect. Water was an unsatisfactory substitute for pomade, and one day at school the master added to his chagrin by bringing his hand down hard on the hair of the incipient fop. This custom among young men of wearing the hair straight up from the forehead was given over on their marriage, when it was allowed to lie flat. This was the sign of a married man, and the wearing of a cap was the token of a married woman.

In this, his ninth or tenth year, the family moved again. Henry began to have an inquiring mind; he was full of questions. His schoolmistress had told him that Noah's deluge had caused all the hills, and that before this event the earth was level. He asked her many questions about this; among others, how large the windows of heaven were to let out so much water. He was curious to know what the earth was made of, and where the material came from. He was told it was made from nothing. This troubled him much, as he had never seen anything made out of nothing. It is interesting to note here that these, among other questions concerning the origin of matter, were the same he wrote and speculated on through the later years of his life. His mother, although so fond of telling her children stories, and those too of the most fabulous and improbable kind, never permitted them to read any books not strictly true. Thus, when she discovered that one of her older boys had somehow got possession of "Gulliver's Travels," and that Henry was reading it secretly, she ordered the book out of the house. Little there was in those days of family discipline which does not in these seem queer and mistaken. In following Henry's account of his most grievous troubles I must often couple the petty and the serious, as when the eating the crust of pie was loathsome and when family jars "sunk," he says, "his youthful soul into the very earth." His remedy for one was an experiment made by himself, one day when the family was absent, of a pie without any crust, into which he put all the internal ingredients he had seen his mother use, — milk, sugar, water, vinegar, salt, pepper, butter, ginger, and allspice. The result miserably failed of his

anticipation, and thereafter he submitted to the crust for the sake of the inside. His escape from wordy wrangles was more successful, — he put his fingers in his ears. He could not, however, shut out the knowledge of the fact, and it depressed his young life. I have already alluded to his sensitiveness, which is often the token of the finest natures, and which at once makes suffering more poignant, the senses more acute, the mind more impressible, and joys deeper. It is evident Henry's father was no common man, and one to try a woman's patience, especially when he spent his nights in the attempt to solve the problem of perpetual motion. Henry was ten or eleven years old when he began to be allowed to sit up in the evening. It was in the autumn; and there happened to be a bright full moon whose light and the phantom-like shadows of the great girdled trees in the wheatfield made an indelible impression, and one remembered to his latest years. It was the first time he had ever seen the moon, and it is remarkable that he noticed the shadows as well as the light, and the deep darkness at the edge of the forest. An imitative period of boyhood came on, and Henry tried to reproduce many of the common utensils in use by a household that made most of its own clothing. He made a pair of weaver's temples, which he exchanged for a pig. Then he tried to produce a pair of pumps, — an old name for slippers; but lasting them wrongly, when turned, they were inside out, which ended shoemaking. The pig which Henry had earned by his labor was a great comfort to him for many weeks, until it was seized by a sheriff for his father's debts. He was not the sole sufferer. In the absence of his father, who had gone into the Eastern States

to sell leather and shoes, and who never returned and of whom we hear no more, his creditors had come on a certain day and stripped the house of nearly everything in it, to the knives and forks, beds, linen, pins and needles, and "sister Ann's scissors, pin-cushion, and sampler." Each creditor disputed with every other for the possession of the scanty household goods. Each had his pile and a wagon ready to carry it away. There was the "Benton pile," the "Salisbury pile," and others more or less large. This scene was the most distressing of his childhood; poor piggy was gone, his pet, on whose fattening he had counted his first earthly riches. While the family troubles continued, his natural pensiveness grew into a settled melancholy. He could not laugh, he could not play; he thought that it was this sad experience which gave his facial expression the sombre cast that it never outgrew. Troubles thickened upon the destitute family. Two of the children, Henry's playmate sister and a younger brother, were taken to the home of their mother's father in Connecticut, and soon after an elder brother followed, and in another year the mother and two remaining children. The journey to Connecticut was through Albany, and for the first time he saw buildings that joined each other, shop windows, a wooden image of an Indian at the door of a tobacconist, and he says that all he could utter was one continual "Oh!" At Albany they took ship, otherwise the schooner "Sallie," Captain Spellman, which including stops was seventeen days in making New York City. The days were full of wonder and novelty to the twelve-year-old boy who had never before seen a vessel, a city, or any scenery comparable to that of the Hudson

River. He observed and took note of everything, so that fifty years afterward he could recall every incident of the voyage. If his head was not turned, the skies were, and the sun seemed then and for years afterward to rise in the west. The schooner remained some time at a wharf on the Battery, and Henry made several excursions around the city and spent one shilling and sixpence for a picture-book. Although he wanted many things that he saw, good to have or to eat, pictures then as always were the most coveted possession. In company with his mother he visited St. Paul's churchyard, and for a purpose. His mother, the stern woman who did not allow her children to read "Gulliver's Travels," was in search of the grave of Charlotte Temple, and, when found, wept over it! Few readers will probably recall the story of Charlotte Temple, which was one of the most widely read books of that generation; a sad tale of seduction, abandonment, profligacy, and death. Whether the narrative was authentic or not, I am unable to say; but it is known as almost the first of a long series of subsequent "true tales founded on fact," and was very popular for many years. Sentimentality, pathetic and moral reflections are its characteristics. A woman with five children, from the backwoods of New York, weeping over the grave of Charlotte Temple in St. Paul's churchyard in the year 1818, strikes one as a unique tribute, and throws a decided and unexpected light on the real nature of Henry's mother. The boy was impressed with a mighty awe on entering St. Paul's church, and felt sure God dwelt there; he dared not speak, nor hardly step. He visited Fulton Market, then recently built and the pride of the city. A boy sees what he has eyes

to see, and his seemed to see everywhere chiefly pocket-knives and picture-books. But what most delighted him were the figure-heads on the vessels lying at the wharves. After four days the "Sallie" spread her sails again, headed for the East River, passed through Hell Gate, which, having heard much about it, Henry thought he should never come out of alive, and in twenty-eight hours reached Newport and in a few hours more Providence, their port of destination. From this place the journey was continued by land to Killingly, Connecticut, the home of Mrs. Dexter's parents. It was fifteen years since she had left them, and the meeting was a scene of emotions of the strange New England kind, expressed in few words, repressed in the unspeakable. Of all this Henry took note, himself entirely unheeded by his grandparents. He was soon put to work, as it was planting-time, until some permanent employment could be found for him. There were several factories in and around Killingly, and in one of these he found a place. At the end of the first week he overheard the overseer say, "That boy is a fast learner; he will soon be able to earn a dollar a week." Henry went home to his mother on Saturday night thinking his prospects settled for life. His leaning toward certain trades, and above this his aspiration to paint pictures, all had ended in a cotton-mill. But his good genius was not far off and rescued him. The cotton-mill did not start up on Monday nor on Tuesday; the owners had failed — most opportunely, and the little cotton-spinner's thread was woven into other webs.

Mrs. Dexter did not remain long with her parents. She hired a house on the borders of Killingly and Pomfret,

where Henry, the oldest child at home, had plenty of work in assisting his mother, chopping wood, and in the care of a garden. He found in the neighborhood new and agreeable companions. He began to go to school again, and had for his teacher a prim, soft-voiced deacon's daughter of forty years. She brought flowers to school, and had other unusual and original ways. Among them, her punishments consisted in the recitation of appropriate hymns for different misdemeanors. Henry's lot was to recite one of Watts', and this punishment was brought upon him by the jealousy of one of the girls on account of his attentions to another. This school seems to have stimulated him for the first time to independent study, which he undertook at home in leisure hours. He made his own copy-book, and his mother made the ink. His amusements were few and simple. He gathered nuts and bartered them in Providence for molasses, tea, and other household necessities. Meanwhile he worked out in the neighborhood, when wanted, for a dollar a week. By a singular and significant chance he came near being employed by a certain Captain Alexander. A neighbor had told Mrs. Dexter that this Captain Alexander wanted a boy. "It is a good place," said the neighbor, "and he has a son Frank, who can teach Henry to paint likenesses." "What!" exclaimed Mrs. Dexter, "paint folks' faces?" "Yes," was the answer; "their boy Frank is a sort of shiftless fellow. He would n't work, he would n't do anything but just hang around the house and paint." This was enough to decide Mrs. Dexter; she could not have her boy in the same house with such a young man. It was a bitter disappointment to Henry, but turned out only

a postponement; for, as we shall see later on, this Frank Alexander, afterward a celebrated portrait-painter, had much to do with putting Henry on his true path. For this time, however, we must follow the boy to the farm of Stephen Dana, in Pomfret, a bachelor farmer, whose house was kept by his mother. Here is a very graphic description of her: "She was now old; she wore a brown dress with a trail fastened up in the back, a white kerchief over her shoulders and pinned in front, and a cap with a full flaunting border. Her hair was snow-white, her lips somewhat parted, and she stooped as she walked." Here is another description of a boy's feelings when he leaves home for the first time, and one, I dare say, thousands of New England men, once poor boys with their own living to get, will recognize: "*Monday, March 27, 1820.* There was a poor woman up early in the morning preparing breakfast by candlelight for her little son, whom she had just awakened, saying, 'Come, Henry, it's time to get up; I'm afraid you will be late at Mr. Dana's.' I could not eat much breakfast; there was a lump in my throat, and my eyes felt watery. Mother said to me, 'Come, come, be a man, and don't think anything about it.' I rather thought she felt bad too, but she tried to hide it from me. She had a little bundle of clothing done up for me. All the way my hat felt strangely, my feet dragged, and all the nut-trees with which I was familiar seemed to say, 'Good-by, Henry.'"

At Stephen Dana's Henry learned many new things. The house was ancient and large. The hearth burned like a bonfire, with logs four feet long. There was a quaint clock, the first Henry had ever seen, and he had

to learn to tell the time of day. Then there were two weekly newspapers, a secular and a religious, the latter of which was the only one permitted to be read on the Sabbath. Strict order was kept in the house, in the barn and woodpile. Mrs. Dana was a pious Presbyterian; on her little table could always be seen the Bible, with her spectacles upon it, and by its side her knitting-work. But Stephen had sundry suspicious-looking square bottles, and a pair of meeting-boots whose upper soles had not been worn thin in seven years. The best room held a bed with copperplate prints, as they were called, (a glazed and highly colored cotton fabric once in vogue for draperies in New England bed-chambers), on which were displayed pictures of Washington, Franklin, and other heroes of the Revolution. These interested the boy more than anything else in the house. By the end of the first week he felt happy and grateful that he had found so good a place, and on the first Sunday night he made a prayer of thanks to his Maker for directing him to such kind people. They were indeed kind,—kind and queer as the queerest Connecticut farmers in their generation. Henry's first Sunday in a Pomfret church was ever a memorable day. For the first time he heard a preacher read a sermon, and had some doubts whether or not it was preaching; he heard the organ, and saw a foot-stove, square pews and a sounding-board. He listened to a prayer so long "he thought his legs would break in two." Much comfort it was to him, on returning, to have a few hours to himself, to polish up his only piece of money, a ninepence; and the very next day more comfort in an ewe lamb, which Mr. Dana gave him. Good

times, indeed, and the happiness of small things, which, in after years of greater, gave him pleasant memories, and an insight of the true elements of human felicity.

Like his mother, Mrs. Dana was a great story-teller, but not of ghosts, warnings, and rustic superstitions. Being thirty years of age at the time of the Declaration of Independence, she was a storehouse of Revolutionary tales, and remembered all the great battles and incidents of the war. She was intensely patriotic, never would drink tea after the Boston Tea Party, and still had in her buffet in the best room a number of cracked cups and saucers as souvenirs of a tea-table the cloth of which, when surprised by three country patriots, the women gathered up by the four corners, and tossed the whole contents into a back room. From her lips Henry heard much of his country's history, and learned to love it. Some peculiarities in Mrs. Dana he never could understand, — why she fastened her trail up in the back; why she should sob and shed tears when speaking of serious things; and above all, having scrubbed the floor, why she should then sprinkle it with sand. He was her attendant to church, and she soon had him in a Sunday-school class, where the boys were paid one cent for so many scriptural verses learned. Henry selected the shortest verses he could find in order to get as many cents as possible while following the path to goodness. The wise Mrs. Dana instructed him in higher motives. And now he had the joy of a visit from his mother, who brought him a pair of new pantaloons, with a stripe down the leg which made him very proud. His mother's visit brought another pleasant result; she engaged to let her daughter Ann help Mrs. Dana in her

housework. Ann was Henry's favorite. She was sixteen years old, a pretty girl, with a mass of long auburn hair, not only long, but so strong she could suspend herself by it for a whole minute, whereby she won a wager which did not altogether please her little brother. The young Puritan thought it was not proper. These small signs indicate, as I think, his extreme sensitiveness to conduct. Most boys would have seen only fun in his sister's performance. He accumulated several ninepences in the course of the year, which he carefully hoarded in the till of his chest; and he tried in vain to calculate how much they would increase in eleven years at compound interest. Eleven years more would make him twenty-four. Tremendous thought! and so far away seemed twenty-four years, he never expected to live to see them. Death was one of old lady Dana's chief subjects of remark. The close of the day reminded her of it, as did Saturday night, and the passing bell. Henry and Stephen Dana stopped in their work to count its strokes, and then waited through the awful pause for the strokes which told the sex, — one for man, two for woman. On returning from the field, nothing was talked of but the death and the funeral, and Mrs. Dana would say, "Ah, Henry, the young may die, and the old must."

In spite of this distressing atmosphere of a dying world Henry thought much of his future and what he should do. He was ashamed and too timid to speak of what he aspired to be. He describes himself at this period as a young aristocrat, by which he means that he felt himself superior to his present employments and associations, and dimly foresaw another and more congenial sphere. Thus early he

was a careful, frugal boy, and very observant of the physical and mental characteristics of men and women. He increased his little hoard by the sale of his lamb for eight shillings, and put them away with his ninepences. He wanted a lock to his chest as Mr. Dana had to his desk, the key of which he was always careful to turn and then hang up in plain sight. In all ways Henry was very considerably treated by this family. He was not allowed to overwork, and was given many unusual privileges. His hardships were trifling; chiefly in boiled dinners, the bane of all new England children, and everlasting brown bread. Wheat bread was only for company. Mrs. Dana baked once a fortnight, according to her ancient custom. But Henry and Ann contrived occasionally to cook themselves a custard, and nothing was said by the kind-hearted mistress. It was a house of kindness, with no scolding woman, or ugly, exacting man; and though there were few pleasures, there were no irritations. Few were the holidays, and seldom the interruptions to the even tenor of the days. An elephant came to town, which Henry saw; but Stephen Dana would not, as he did not believe in elephants, — that is, he did not believe there were any such animals. But though Stephen believed not in elephants, he had some soft places in his heart rather affecting to read of. He was, as has been said, an old bachelor, yet not from his own choice. Once he had loved and expected to marry, but, being rather slow in coming to the point, another suitor had carried off the prize. This pair lived near him, and their young children were Stephen's chief pleasure in life. He never went near their house himself, but often sent Henry to bring the children to his own,

when he would play with them, carry them about, one under each arm, and even let his hay get wet to be with them. So the affections were kept alive in the house of the old bachelor and the aged mother, while Henry and his sister grew more fond and intimate. She was always doing something to make life pleasanter for him; now it was braiding him a new straw hat and again baking a custard. They went about together among the neighbors, and their intimacy and devotion to each other were much commented upon. Life was not all work, as we sometimes think, on those ancient farms. There were rainy days also, times of leisure when Henry would be trying his hand at sundry inventions which want of tools would at length abruptly bring to an end. In his mind he had invented a mowing-machine, another for threshing, and still another for flying. The attic was a treasury of antiquated and cast-off articles. There were a lot of shoe and knee buckles, cocked hats, porridge pots, tin ovens, and tin lanterns, a great and little spinning-wheel, old canes, hetchels and foot-stoves, a large pile of Poor Richard's Almanacs, and a mysterious chest which was never opened. Dried herbs, corn, and beans hung all about from the rafters. There Henry could amuse himself on stormy days. But neither the attic nor other parts of the house contained any books. There was, however, a small public library in the town, from which Henry obtained permission to take books. The first one he selected, and probably the first he had ever read, was Silliman's Travels. He thought it must be the most interesting book ever printed; so it seemed in his ingenuous ignorance.

He was now in his sixteenth year and the third of service

with the Dana family. He had been to school winters, and had shown himself an apt pupil, standing at the head of his classes. If he had work to do that permitted, he had a book near by. In this manner, while threshing one fall, he committed the whole of Lindley Murray's grammar to memory, and then his arithmetic in the same way, going round the threshing-floor with the nominative case, indicative mood, and present tense, and when reaching his book again, taking up some other of the rules of grammar or arithmetic.

It began to be noised about that he was to be Stephen Dana's heir, so well liked was the boy, and so intimate had they become. His mother thought he was beginning to look like Stephen and to have his form, even to the round shoulders of his master. In this his sixteenth year he says life began to assume a stern reality to him. He began to revolve the problem of an occupation. The docile boy, accepting his mother's opinion that fiddling, poetry, and painting only prepared the bed of the shiftless and the poor, had to turn his face away from those attractive directions. What was there, then, that he could do? He thought of teaching; but his mother thought of blacksmithing; and so one day he went prospecting to a blacksmith shop. At Danielsonville, six miles from Pomfret, he found an opening for apprenticeship to John Chollar. Mrs. Dana gave him her blessing and a Bible, and Stephen drove him and his little chest to his new home, on April 7, 1822.

On a floor of black earth, standing beside his anvil, with one foot on the anvil block, and in one hand a hammer, Mr. Chollar greeted him and said he was glad he had come. Without further ceremonies Henry rolled up his sleeves and

put on a leather apron, in which we must now see him for the next eleven years. With a great effort he choked back his tears. Once more all his hopes for a different career were blighted. After a few weeks' trial Henry was regularly indentured to Mr. Chollar for four years, to learn the whole art and mystery of blacksmithing. His reflections on the entrance to a new occupation are so naive that I quote a few sentences: "Was I always to be a blacksmith? I never saw a blacksmith able to be a blacksmith and ride in a chaise. It was said Mr. Chollar was making money; he had married a fine wife, and all this I might perhaps do; but it all looked so dreary to me. It was not what I had aspired to be and to do."

In those days a young apprentice had many other things to do besides learning a trade. He must do the chores at his master's house and the odd jobs at the shop. And so Henry continued for some time longer to be a hewer of wood and a drawer of water, to feed the pig, milk the cow, and help his mistress on wash-days. These things must usually be done before breakfast. After breakfast the pious blacksmith read a chapter of the Bible, made a prayer, and then the long day's work began, from sun to sun, and in winter, by the light of the forge and a candle suspended above the anvil. Holidays were few. In the parlor of Mr. Chollar's house there hung his portrait, painted by Frank Alexander. When Henry saw it for the first time, his old feelings revived and he could think of nothing else. It was singular how this painter's name and work seemed to follow Henry wherever he went, and in the end, as we shall see, influenced his whole subsequent career. But we must for a little while keep to

the shop. There Henry's common duties were to take horses, which were to be shod, out of the wagon, put them in again, blow the bellows, bring in charcoal, fetch water, and hoist the gate for the water-power of the trip-hammer. When he found a chance, he learned, working by himself, a little of his trade. The blacksmith's trade at that time included the making by hand of all the tools in use on the farm. To make a good hoe and axe was the *ne plus ultra* of the forge and anvil and of an accomplished blacksmith. When left alone, Henry practised at everything he saw done in the shop. In the first year he plated a hoe, a difficult work, and mended the broken horn of the anvil, which his master had told him never could be done. His chief pleasure in his trade was undertaking difficult jobs, and though he does not speak of it, he must soon have been appreciated by his master. Praise for boys and apprentices was thought impolitic; censure and correction good to make men of them. Henry's thoughts were not in the shop; oftener they were in the parlor with Mr. Chollar's portrait, or dreaming and planning some future work more to his taste than horse-shoes and trip-hammers.

Eighteen months after his apprenticeship had begun, an event happened which, seemingly unimportant, proved of much consequence. A family by the name of Kelley moved into a house next to his master's. Mrs. Kelley was a sister of the painter Alexander. When Henry found this out, he made up his mind to become acquainted with the family, led by some dim presentiment that it would be of use to him. After this the blacksmith's shop seemed less depressing. At the same period he made the acquaintance of the Tiffany family, one of whose sons, about Henry's

age, was Charles, subsequently the head of the great jewelry firm of New York. The lonely boy, working thirteen and fourteen hours a day, occupied himself in the short intervals between labor and sleep in making rhymes and comforting himself with reading Zimmerman on Solitude, the "Boston Recorder" and the Bible. These were the only books in his master's house, this the only newspaper. The limited outlook and opportunities of the old New England towns and villages were as astonishing as their general intelligence and sturdy maintenance of their civil and religious rights. It requires a careful study of details to understand the paradox. While attempting to show the growth of a single human being in such environments as I am describing, I hope somewhat of the general characteristics of the time will appear and indirectly explain what has made this country of ours what it is.

In the second year of Henry's apprenticeship he worked over time in the night, earning a little extra money. He made horseshoe nails at ten cents a hundred and peg-cutters for a dollar each. At the end of the second year his menial labors were over; he was promoted, another boy was apprenticed who wore ruffled shirts on Sundays and who refused to do chores and mangle clothing. In his third year Henry appears to have become a skilled workman. He made axes, hoes, shoe-knives with which a man could shave himself, and pen-knives that would clip a hair. As now the senior apprentice, he began to feel himself of some importance; he grew more cheerful and could keep his face cleaner; but he had not yet the courage to go into the house where lived the sister of Francis

Alexander, who all the time was his mysterious guiding star. He had once seen this young artist at a distance, and it made his heart beat as though it were the presence of some sweetheart. The youth who has not had this experience stands little chance of becoming its cause.

With his improving fortunes came the wish to have what he found to admire in others, — a finer nose, better features, and handsomer hair; in short, everything men praise and honor, —

“Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
Desiring this man’s art and that man’s scope.”

It took time and much reflection to accept himself just as he was, and to discover that his hand was his own as long as it injured none, and that his foot could be planted forward as long as it did not tread on another’s. His moral nature grew with his growth, so that he easily escaped the temptations of youth. His mother’s teachings were always present with him, and she had laid a special emphasis on the idea that God could discern the secrets of the heart. At the same time he became conscious of a certain constitutional weakness the effect of an abnormal sensitiveness. He confesses that he felt himself inferior to every one with whom he cared to associate, and he thought others took the same measure of him. He suffered much from this mistake, and it accompanied him to some extent through life, and was the foundation of the modesty and self-effacement so charming and noticeable when there was no longer any occasion for them. He gave full credit to all men, and was always more than generous in his

judgments. A sensitive nature loves and is immensely stimulated by approbation; and censure is correspondingly depressing and cruel. How much he suffered in his childhood and youth the pages of his autobiography plainly show, and also how little it took to give him joy and exalt his spirit. But repression was the fashion of the time; do what he would he could hardly ever extract a spark of praise from the rocky and rigorous hearts of his masters and employers. He fought out the hard battle by his own thoughts, a home-made philosophy, and by the help of his faith in God.

The outward incidents of his life during his apprenticeship are meagre. There was a Fourth of July celebration, at which, by the explosion of a gun-barrel, he nearly lost his right hand; there was a hanging with fifteen thousand spectators, all of whom, he says, went home declaring they would never see another; his old and fast friend Mrs. Dana died, and he went a sincere mourner to the funeral, and could never bear to go into the house again.

All at once, during the year 1826, without indicating he had fallen in love, he states in his autobiography that he is engaged to Miss Kelley, the niece of Francis Alexander, the artist. The steps which led to this acquaintance and engagement are not given. But however it happened, he was now in the family circle of an artist, in a position to make his acquaintance, to see his works, all of which soon occurred, and "I said to my inmost soul, thou also art to be a painter." Yet not a word escaped his lips at present as to his intentions and hopes, — hopes which sustained him through the remaining years of blacksmithing.

At the close of his apprenticeship he had become the most skilled workman in the region. Whatever could be done at the forge or bench, with anvil or hammer or file or cold chisel, he could do. He felt even then, as he once said to me, speaking of those days, that he could hammer a statue out of iron. Difficult jobs were intrusted to him, and he never failed of success. It was doubtless the native art instinct which made him such an accomplished artisan in working his rough materials. His dexterity he inherited with his name; and to this were added a quick perception and rapidity of execution. These gifts were noted when he began to cut marble into human likenesses. For the present he was making axes at the rate of a dozen in a forenoon, when other workmen made the same number in a day. He was earning a dollar a day and his board. At length his "Freedom Day" came; his apprenticeship, with its heart and bone aches, its few hours of pleasure, was at an end. He celebrated it by a visit to his mother, who still lived in Pomfret, and by a call on Miss Kelley, his affianced. But days meant dollars, and none must be wasted. He still continued at his labors, with the bitter thought that he was no nearer his true vocation than four years before. However, circumstances, or that destiny which presides over the fortunes of men who never forget their ideals, was, unseen and unguessed, leading him on.

In the summer of 1826 or 1827 it was announced that Francis Alexander would spend his vacation at his home if half-a-dozen sitters could be obtained for him. By the exertions of Henry, five were promised, and he himself would be the sixth. It was not any wish to see

himself on canvas that influenced him, but simply the desire to discover how the work was done. This appears to have been the absorbing thought of his life at this period, — “to see a painter commence a portrait and learn the rudiments of the art.” “My mother,” he goes on to say, “had told me there was a mystery about it, and that no one could do it who was not born under a particular star. I did not know what star ruled at my birth, but I felt that I could paint a picture if I had the colors and could see the way in which they were used.” Hence his determination to obtain the sitters and be one himself. August came, and brought the painter. He was often at Henry’s shop, and was fond of observing how the various jobs were done. One day he called and said he was ready to begin on his portrait. Henry took off his leather apron, washed his face and hands and put on his best suit, and adjusted a large white handkerchief around his neck, after the fashion of the day, and still had doubts as to the proper dress for such an important occasion. He entered the extemporized studio. Shawls and spreads darkened the windows, except the upper part of one for the high light. Henry took in all the outfit of the painter, — brushes, colors, and a curious thing which he later learned was a palette. But a great disappointment awaited him, for when the painter began to work he could not see the canvas; it was turned from him. However, he made some important discoveries by asking questions. He found out why the windows were darkened, and what the cup contained into which the artist now and then dipped his brushes. He also learned the cost of colors. He was cautious in his questions, fearing to be questioned in

return. At the second meeting Alexander would talk of everything save his art; but his sitter surprised him by some inquiries about ultramarine. At the third sitting the portrait was completed, all too soon for the sitter, who had hoped to learn the secrets of the art. Yet he had divined more than his eyes saw.

In May, 1828, he was married to Miss Kelley. He was twenty-one, she was twenty. This union lasted for twenty-nine years and was always a happy one. To his wife's excellent administration of his affairs was due in large measure his endurance of the early struggles, and in his later successes a good measure of freedom from worldly cares. They had three children, a son who died in infancy and two daughters; one of the latter, Mrs. Harriet D. Mason, is lately deceased; the other, Mrs. Anna E. Douglass, still lives, and has devoted much time and care to the preservation of her father's works and memory.

The newly married pair went to housekeeping in an outlying village of Killingly, where he had purchased a blacksmith's stand and begun business for himself. Now his own master, disposer of his own days and with a house where he could do what he pleased without observation, his mind dwelt much on painting, and he resolved to try. He had no materials for the attempt, and did not dare to go to Providence, the nearest city, to find them, for fear one of the six persons whom he knew in that city should discover him buying paints instead of iron. Accordingly he decided to go to Hartford, forty-five miles away, and where no one knew him. Nor did he tell any one his errand, not even his wife, but

went about it as darkly as if it were some dreadful crime. After an all-day stage-ride, he arrived in Hartford. Early the next morning he was about his business. He stumbled upon a sign-painter's shop, where he had a curious interview with the proprietor, who he found had once been assailed by an ambition to be a painter, and Henry saw himself exactly reflected in the story of this man. He was kindly and affable, told him all he knew of color, and invited him to visit the State House to see an artist who was copying Stuart's portrait of Washington. Here Henry asked some questions about colors, but found the artist disinclined to communicate the secrets of his art. At length he found a shop where colors were sold, and where he had an amusing time evading questions as to what he wanted them for, to confess which he says would have "rent him into a thousand fragments." He had learned something of the relative proportions of color needed in painting, and so he bought most of white, then yellow, black, and enough prussian blue to last forty years, and completed his purchases with oil and brushes. On his way home he was attacked by a fit of despondency which tempted him to throw his paints and oils out of the coach window. But a little harder work than usual to make up for lost time restored his cheerfulness and the resumption of his purposes. He stretched a canvas; but, knowing nothing of the necessary sizing of it, the paints struck through and he was obliged to paint it over several times.

His mother was his first subject. He worked at once with the brush, without drawing, and in three sittings had completed the portrait as far as his skill at that

time would allow. It was a faithful likeness, good in form and color, whatever technical faults it had. It is still preserved in the family, and is a very remarkable painting, considering that it was done by a young man of twenty-two, without training, practice, or any previous advantages whatever. After this the consciousness that he could paint a portrait was most precious. He began more clearly to divine what his future was to be. A new life was revealed to him, freed from the hammer and the horse-shoe, freed from everything that hitherto had made the day but a hopeless and sordid round of uncongenial labor.

Hast thou ever seen a country blacksmith's forge when there was no work for it? It looks black and fireless, but it is not; in its heart there is heat which a blast from the bellows blows into a flame. It was thus in the soul of young Dexter; the fire of his genius smouldered through long intervals of obstruction and despair, yet never died out; a favoring breath could awaken it, a chance word, any circumstance unapparent except to him who kept the sacred spark.

He could now wait patiently the propitious hour of his complete deliverance. He was willing to toil and sweat at his anvil for a while longer, being sure of the future. He had no suitable canvas, nor did he know very well how to prepare his colors, and was constantly interrupted by the calls of his business. That he might paint during any moment of leisure, he kept one room in his house which was so near to his shop that he could easily be called when wanted. This room and its purpose were kept a profound secret to all save his own family, among whom

he found subjects sufficient for his frequently interrupted sittings. He undertook a portrait of one of his sisters. In this he was not so successful as with that of his mother. She was young, and had none of those strongly marked lines which are easier to fix on canvas. It became noised about in the town that he was painting portraits. It reached the ears of Alexander, who sent him word that he should be at home shortly, and would call and examine his work. He came; the pictures were shown, and the humble blacksmith felt that his fate was in the hands of a man whom he had every reason to believe his friend. He expected merciful criticism. Instead of criticism, Alexander asked him if he intended to become an artist, and, if so, what was to become of his family? One may be allowed to think he had an eye to the interests of his niece, whom Dexter had recently married. When Henry flinched at this question, and "like a fool," as he says in the page before me, "denied myself, and answered that I should never be an artist," Alexander, apparently relieved from any anxiety on account of his niece, or of having a rival in his own demesne, began to speak in praise of the portraits, and suggested what was needed to improve them. After this interview with Alexander he lost hope for a time. His sensitive nature was crushed for want of encouragement and help from the only source within his little world, and once more the forge blazed and the anvil grew brighter. For seven years more he bowed to the yoke and bore the burden of despair. Then at length he broke all the bonds that had held him. He rented his business, sold his house and began in earnest to paint portraits of his family and friends until he felt sure enough to offer

his brush to a larger public. By this time Alexander, who had been his guiding star from boyhood, though sometimes obscured, became very friendly to him; and, by his advice, Dexter went to Providence in the spring of 1886 and opened a studio.

II

THE PORTRAIT-PAINTER

MR. DEXTER was a prudent man, having been inured to the economies of New England communities from childhood, and did not abandon his business until he had laid by some hundreds of dollars with which to face the expenses of an experiment as a portrait-painter. His friends and neighbors thought him little less than a fool to give up a profitable trade, and at his age to think of becoming an artist. Undismayed, he set out for Providence, leaving his family behind for the time. In going to Providence he was still following in the track of Francis Alexander, who had been in that city some time previously, and had painted family portraits among the leading citizens. In Providence he made friends and found some patrons, probably through the recommendation of Alexander. As later he was most successful in producing excellent likenesses in portrait-busts, so in painting this seems to have been his especial gift. Of their technical merits I am not able to speak with positiveness. But a friendly letter from Alexander at this time hints at some defects, while praising his work as a whole. Omitting other personal matters, I extract from the letter what especially concerns Dexter's efforts as a painter. "I have observed your paintings particularly, and have compared your first productions with your last. I must acknowledge that

your last are painted in a better style than I thought you had attained to. I give you joy, and I give you credit, too, for the study and the industry it must have cost you to make so great advancement in so short a time. The backgrounds of the portraits are almost right; the only fault is they are too blotchy or too spotted. The transparent effect is produced, however, and that is encouraging. I think, instead of changing your style for the style of some one else, you have only to improve and perfect your own. You seem to be on the right track. Drawing is the foundation of all excellence in painting. I think you draw the face well now, and the figure better than you did. You ought to define the folds of the dress a little more, particularly about the shoulders and neck of your portraits. 'T is well to let the portrait sink into shade and obscurity at or near the bottom of the picture. . . . I advise you to stay in Providence as long as you can have constant employment at twenty dollars a portrait, and I advise the good Providence people to sit to you until they are all painted. They will never get such perfect likenesses and so well painted for that price from any other artist with whom I am acquainted. But I advise you to paint for that price while you have full employment; not because your portraits are not worth more, but because you must have a great deal of practice, facility and finish in your painting before you can ask fifty or a hundred dollars. You must not be in such haste to get one hundred dollars for your portraits as to deserve it. Always bear that in mind; because if you once deserve it, you will always get it; but if you exact it before you really deserve it, you may be put to the humiliation of lowering your price."

In a few weeks he returned to his family in Killingly, and not with an empty purse. He had painted at least a dozen successful portraits of prominent Providence people, and had received more than his price for some of them. His eyes were opened to what had already been done by other artists, and to the serious nature of his newly chosen profession. He realized how much was to be accomplished before he could deserve the name of artist. Fresh trials awaited him; many heretofore had been met and overcome, and now having brought himself over the threshold of his aspirations, which in his sanguine outlook he supposed would admit him to complete fulfilment, he found greater impediments than before. These, however, were of the kind whose conquest brings pleasure and power. To work along one's chosen line and according to one's genius, with or without the world's recognition, is the truest happiness known to man. In Providence the field was not large, and Dexter was only a gleaner after several artists had canvassed the city. In those days there were more patrons of portrait-painting than at present, as well it might be, when you could have a successful likeness taken for from twenty to fifty dollars. Many such portraits are now of priceless value on account either of the subject or the artist. Age has mellowed and darkened the pigments, and hidden in the background technical deficiencies. The drawing may be rude, but somehow the earlier American painters, ere there was much thought of pose or technique or idealization, had a way of bringing out a likeness squarely and boldly. They had not yet been troubled with theories, nor much divided by rivalries and schools. There were no academies, no exhibitions except

private ones, no hanging above or below the line. Most of our early sculptors and painters had been mechanics in their younger days, and were self-taught in their subsequent career as artists. Native talent led them into their profession, or some chance developed it. John Frazee, who appears to have been our first native-born sculptor, was originally a stone-cutter. H. Augur was a grocer's clerk and shoemaker. Horatio Greenough—well-born and offered the best education of his time—left college behind and devoted himself to art, and, though he died young, has the distinction of being the precursor of sculpture in this country. Hiram Powers was in early life a mechanic, or rather a mechanician. Ball Hughes was by trade a stone-cutter; so was Clevenger; and E. A. Brackett tried six trades before finding his true one. H. K. Brown painted signs, and cut silhouettes with scissors in his rough apprenticeship to art. These, and many other instances in this and other countries in all times, show that neither opportunities nor special education are the school of the arts.

I consider Dexter fortunate in his early life, notwithstanding its hardships and postponements. If he sometimes almost lost his identity in the long years of uncongenial labor, it was only to find it again with an ever-increasing intensity of purpose and clearer insight of what he wished to do and to be. I do not use the words *to be* to round the sentence, but to mark the moral characteristics of the man who, while so ambitious to follow the life of an artist, neglected no common duty toward his family, his fellow-men and the religion he professed. He never cast so much as a sidelong glance into the risky realm of Bohemia, was strictly temperate, economical, provided for his family

when without food himself, and was wholly unpretentious in all his habits of life and in his manners. For this I honor and praise him. I admire, more than anything else in our time and native land, the plebeian-born man who maintains and cherishes his natural simplicity, and who, distinguished or wealthy, declines to join the patrician ranks of society.

After Dexter had exhausted the opportunities that Providence offered, there came another short period of uncertainty. He was conscious of being as yet only an amateur. Practice was his great desire at this time; he returned to his family in Killingly, and painted everybody who could be induced to sit to him. But this work could not last; a larger field must be found. Once more he made a bold leap into a dark uncertainty, although it was into Boston, then the most promising resort of artists and writers in the United States. He had only one acquaintance there, Francis Alexander. He was friendly and helpful. It was in the autumn of 1886 that he arrived in Boston and hired Bromfield Hall, on the street of the same name, a room sixty by twenty feet. This he divided into three portions; one for a studio, another for a chamber, and a third he rented. He boarded himself, after what manner can be guessed when his food bill per month for some time was three dollars and fifteen cents. The times were hard; money scarce; coal was eleven dollars per ton, wood the same per cord, and flour eleven dollars a barrel. If money was scarce, sitters were scarcer. Artists of reputation were out of work; what could a beginner without name and friends expect? The lawyers were without clients, doctors without fees. People, then as now, in times of business

depression, starved artists or drove them into the prostitution of their gifts. Idleness was something Dexter never could endure, and he had many unhappy, because unoccupied days in Bromfield Hall. Alexander introduced him to a few prominent men in Boston, among them Col. Samuel Swett, his father-in-law, who became a friend and encourager. He struggled on for some time, painting a few portraits and copying a few, barely earning enough to meet his expenses.

But suddenly a new turn came in his affairs; a new path opened which he was to follow for the remainder of his life. He was casually recommended to secure some clay which the sculptor Greenough was leaving behind him when about to go to Italy, and practise modelling as a help toward obtaining a better knowledge of form in portraits. He had the clay brought to his studio, where it lay in a corner for some months, growing dry and hard. In an idle hour he gathered up some of it, softened it with water, placed it on the top of a barrel and began to mould the head of a brother artist who happened in, and to whom he playfully remarked, "Come, White, let me put your head into this mud." He had no knowledge of the manner of handling clay, and having no tools, he used his fingers for forming the features. The clay became an amorphous lump; then the rude outline of a face such as we fancy we see in clouds or mountain crag appeared; and at last the distinct lineaments and similitude of the face before him, frightening himself and astonishing his model. And this was the morning and the evening of the first day when the sculptor was created in the soul of Henry Dexter.

III

THE SCULPTOR

FOR a time longer Dexter continued painting portraits and modelling in clay, according as he had orders for the one or leisure for the other. He had had no regular instruction in either art, and devised his own methods and made his own tools. At this period, with a single exception, he had never even watched a painter at his work, or clay in the hands of a sculptor; least of all, had he any notion how to handle a block of marble, for it is doubtful if a portrait-bust in marble or any sort of statuary had hitherto been attempted in this country. Suitable marble was hard to obtain and very expensive. It was understood that in Italy it was cheap, and journey-men, half artists, could be hired to cut marble after models with sufficient faithfulness. Hence, at the dawn of sculpture in this country, the students of the art, who appear to have sprung up almost simultaneously between 1830 and 1840, went to Italy as soon as they could, where most of them succumbed to the climate and prematurely died. This exodus continues to the present day, both among sculptors and painters, and has proved in the highest degree detrimental to any distinctive national characteristic in art. But it is said this is just what we do not want; art in its best estate is universal. Nevertheless,

Dexter believed that it must first be particular, local, if you please, expressive of a confined and individual civilization, race, climate, institutions, beliefs, — everything, in short, which divides mankind and shuts it to its own isolated development, — before it can become a thing of beauty for all the world to admire. Our runaway artists bring us back only Greek imitations and French color, which remind us here, in poor artless America, of the African cannibal who has eaten his victim and is wearing his silk hat and patent-leather shoes, — all between he is naked. The sturdy New England Yankee, for such was Dexter by descent and breeding, would have none of this. He had no longings for Europe, and thought that an American artist — if with genius, so much the more — ought to stay at home, develop himself in his own soil, and devote his brush or his chisel to native subjects. I mention this view of his here because it will explain once for all much that was, and continues to be, unusual in this sculptor's work and career. I may also add to what has been said, his intense patriotism and interest in his country's progress in every artistic and intellectual direction. He had spent only a very small portion of his life in cities; he was the child of the inland country and of nature, and continued throughout his life to have an unsophisticated heart.

He loved his art well, so well indeed that he could not bear to forego or commit to others even the mere drudgery of it. He liked to do every part of the work with his own hands, and thought this practice, and the invention and manufacture of his own tools, and all the appliances of his profession, helped him to a fuller and more intimate understanding of sculpture. Doubtless it was so, and was

the secret of the rapidity and sureness with which clay took form, and stone fell away from the imprisoned statue. Much as he might regret his twelve years at the anvil, it must have been due to his long exercise in the manual arts of the blacksmith's shop, where, as I have said, all sorts of work were brought for mending or making, that he was able almost at once to cut marble into human effigies.

Bromfield Hall saw his first experiments in modelling and reproduction in plaster casts. He was much encouraged in his earliest attempts by the approval of his good genius, Alexander, who, happening to see the clay model he had made of the artist White, procured him at once another subject, a Cambridge student by the name of Lane. These, so far as I have discovered, were his first and only experiments before attempting the serious business of modelling a bust to be preserved and exhibited. Col. Samuel Swett, whose portrait he had already painted, sat to him for a portrait-bust. Dexter put forth all his power to make it a success, and it was. It brought him into public notice; but he says this first essay in modelling gave him no such inward satisfaction as when he painted his first portrait. People praised and wondered, wondered with that wonder which always attends the sudden outburst of power with no antecedent preparation or expectation in the public mind. That which is phenomenal is liable to brief and delusive applause. Unfortunately it follows some precociously developed talent, or prodigy of music, mathematics, or in letters or art, which after a little the fatal mantle of oblivion covers. The rise is instant and dazzling; the collapse more slow, but inevitable. It strikes the world with amazement and curiosity

that a peasant should write verses, or a mechanic become an artist. We rush to read and to view. A genius is discovered, and it is well for him if the discovery be not his ruin. Certain it is he needs the public notice; and an artist needs it rather more than a poet, unless, like Millet, he is willing to lead the life of a peasant. The poet can wait and starve without suffering quite so sharply as the artist. The former can dig potatoes while meditating the thankless muse. Writing is its own reward; art must be also, yet hungers more for a customer.

There were many years between 1830 and 1850 when Boston, although commercially pinched, did not suffer artists and the literary class to go altogether unrecognized and unpaid. Its noble citizens were proud of their city and its artists, poets, orators and statesmen, most of whom it encouraged with honors and patronage. Any marked talent was sure of appreciation and reward; and the city was not so big, or so divided in race and taste, but that the interest in art and literature could be general in all classes. In a small way it was the Augustan age of the city. As was said once of Weimar, Boston, in 1840, had ten thousand poets and philosophers, and a few inhabitants. If it did not last long, its influence has been extensive and is a proud memory.

Dexter was fortunate in coming to Boston when he did. He was noticed as soon as he definitely took up sculpture, and had as much work as he could do. He was known as the "blacksmith artist" at first, and of course with no little wonder; but then nearly every one of any importance in the city had sprung from similar humble and obscure beginnings. The surprise soon wore off, and Dexter held his

rightful place as the maker of himself and his fortunes. He was not overpowered by his successes, but labored with increased ardor and the most patient industry to make himself master of the sculptor's art. He took lessons in anatomy, and was constantly studying the human figure. He made busts of the Rev. Hubbard Winslow, and of Peter Harvey, Daniel Webster's great friend,—for each of which he received fifty dollars. This made him rich and hopeful. Better things were in store and near. The Rev. Mr. Winslow brought into his studio Boston's most honored citizen and its mayor, Samuel Eliot, to sit for his bust. When it was completed and in plaster, Mr. Eliot was so well satisfied that he said, "Mr. Dexter, you may put my bust into marble." What! the marble bust of the mayor of Boston, its great man at the moment, most distinguished among his fellow-men for culture, liberality, and all the other Boston virtues, and he wishes to be made immortal now in stone! No wonder that the artist felt elated, and that success seemed assured, fame and a livelihood almost within his grasp. "I could not believe what I heard," Dexter says in his own mention of the incident. He had no marble, nor any of the tools of the sculptor; moreover, he had never put mallet to chisel; but the marble could be bought, and, as to tools, he knew well how to make them with his own hands. He set to work, having to teach himself everything that pertains to the cutting of marble. I believe neither then nor ever afterward had he seen a sculptor at work. I would that we had some record of his sensations in this his earliest attempt at sculpture. I find none, and it must be left to conjecture. Every one who uses even a pen has some notion how a portrait is

produced ; how it is built up from outlines and color, and expression brought out with the brush. Just the reverse seems the procedure in sculpture ; it arrives at results by elimination ; and for every touch of the painter's brush, the sculptor must cut away something ; he cannot paint out and paint in ; every blow must be decisive. Hence, it seems to me, as I try to imagine Dexter's management of his first block of marble, there must have been infinite trepidation and misgivings in the preliminary reduction of the mass to the rough lineaments of a face, and an equal delight when he had succeeded in producing a likeness. A likeness was the main thing to achieve, and all that was required by the public or patrons. In the sculptured figure or bust we cannot look for the reproduction of the inward spirit, so often interpreted in painting, and there is left to the spectator the task of supplying this from his knowledge of the individual portrayed, his history, his achievements, or whatever else distinguished him. Therefore only the greatest men or the most ideal subjects should be honored in marble, to which associations and imagination may lend what the too rigid stone cannot convey. Form is the sculptor's only means of accomplishing this. To his first marble bust Dexter succeeded in giving an admirable likeness. The features and character of Mr. Eliot, a well-fed, rotund, prosperous man, were well enough expressed in the rounded and polished marble. It was considered a great achievement ; Mr. Eliot's personal worth and official position added lustre to the work, and attracted attention and commendation to the artist. Dexter's record of the work is this : "I have this day, June 9, 1888, completed a marble bust of Hon. Samuel A. Eliot, it being the first I

ever made, the first time I ever struck marble with mallet and chisel."

Meanwhile his circumstances had permitted him to move his family from Connecticut. He took a house in Cambridgeport, on Auburn Street, nearly opposite that of Washington Allston. He soon found the rent too much for his purse, and moved next to a smaller house on Harvard Street, in the easterly part of Cambridgeport. It may be as well to mention here his other removals. In 1844 he had saved money enough to purchase and partly pay for a house on Broadway, building a studio and gallery in connection with it, where he continued to abide until 1878, when he took up his residence on the same street, Old Cambridge. To return for a moment to the Auburn Street house; it was there he became acquainted with Allston, whom he found friendly and helpful. He has left an account of a call he once made on the painter, which is worth preserving.

"To-day, August 22, 1838, I called upon Washington Allston. I arrived at the door precisely at 12 M. I rapped, but no answer; the door, to all appearance, was locked, but no key inside or out; a handle to the door, but no thumb-piece or latch, and the hole firmly plugged up. I left, thinking I had mistaken the hour of the appointment, and returned again about one o'clock; rapped as before, was on the point of leaving again, as I had no reply, but upon repeating my rap I heard a voice saying, 'Wait a minute;' and precisely at one the door opened, and I was received as cordially as I ever was by my most intimate acquaintance. I stood doubting, and apologized and expressed my fears that I was intruding. As I passed from

the hall into the painting-room, I noticed his care in locking both the doors and withdrawing the keys. But what did I see on entering?

"A large room, so large that it looked almost empty, though it contained here and there boxes, canvases turned towards the wall, easels, and in one corner a great number of casts of heads, feet, knees, hands, — all fragments from the antique, — with several figures originally whole, but now much broken. Allston took from a closet a foot of his own modelling, of colossal size, — a splendid thing it was. He made it for the purpose of copying in one of his historical paintings. He then brought forth two small figures that he had modelled for the same purpose. He offered to loan me the *Gladiator* to copy. After he had gone through with the casts, which gave me much pleasure, I asked to be informed as to the manner he prepared absorbent grounds, to which he readily consented; he said, 'Anything I can tell you I shall do with great pleasure. I have a formula for those grounds which I will find and send to you. I will show you a canvas prepared in that way;' then he turned around the canvas with a sketch upon it which attracted my attention much more than the canvas itself. Then he showed me sketch after sketch; one in particular attracted my attention; it was a scene from Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, in outline, with perhaps two dozen figures, a landscape, and river. Some of the figures were extremely graceful. Then he showed me a sketch of 'Christ Healing the Lame Man.'"

Mr. Allston died in July, 1843. Dexter was with him the evening before his death, and was one of the few per-

sons at his funeral service, which took place after dark, the burial service at the grave being read by the light of lanterns.

His next order was from Hon. Thomas H. Perkins, foremost among Boston's art patrons. It was for a bust of Ellen Tree, the most celebrated English actress of her day, and whom Dexter had already painted in one of her stage characters. To this order Mr. Perkins also added a replica of a hand which the artist had made as a study from the hand of his little daughter Anna. There is a pretty story connected with this hand: when it was done, Mr. Perkins gave the sculptor a check for fifty dollars, which he drew from the bank in one hundred silver half-dollars. These he took home tied up in a handkerchief. He emptied the shining heap into his little daughter's lap, as the successful result of her own hand. The child had a small wagon which the half-dollars filled heaping full. She drew the wagon about in play, and upset it many times to see the load of silver roll over the floor, and hear its musical chink.

His next marble bust was of Judge Jackson. Then followed the memorial marble of *The Binney Child*, the little Emily, which at once made him famous. This pathetic figure in full length and recumbent—its little hands folded over the bosom, sleeping, nevermore to awaken, nor would one wish to disturb so reposeful and sweet a sleep—drew throngs to Mount Auburn. It was the principal attraction of that celebrated cemetery, and largely helped to make its early fame. I can myself recall the time when it was a common excursion, if one wished to take a walk or entertain a friendly stranger, to go out to

Mount Auburn to see *The Binney Child*. With some truth it may be said visitors went there for that single purpose; and it continues to be a great attraction. Time and storms have made sad records on the delicately chiselled features; and it became necessary, in order to save it from complete destruction, to enclose it in glass, which has been done by the filial daughter of the sculptor.

Memorial sculpture for private persons and families has lately given place to extreme and unadorned simplicity. A small plain stone, with name and date in briefest compass, is just now the ruling taste; or, for more distinguished persons, a natural boulder, with possibly a verse or significant quotation. Such boulders mark the graves of Emerson and Agassiz, and of a lesser man, Levi Thaxter; on the sea-worn side of the latter's monument is inscribed an epitaph of six lines expressly written for it by Robert Browning. Forests of white marble memorials no longer afflict the subdued tastes of the more cultivated classes, nor mar the beauty of God's acres of green turf, their "mortal hillocks," and their sheltering trees. Still one must often note the touching exception in the case of young children cut off before their time. The old and the distinguished can take care of their posthumous memories; but it is hard to give up to nothingness and oblivion those infantile souls who have not had time to cause themselves to be remembered among men. They must have the tribute of art and poetry to perpetuate their short and blessed years. Nor can we regret this, since it has been the *motif* of much of the finest statuary the world over, and made it possible for alien eyes and hearts to pay respect to the early dead, and share the pain of years that had lost their

spring. No one can look upon *The Binney Child* without some such emotions. As a work of art, it is faultless and shows great skill and ingenuity in details. It is full length, and in high relief, and must have involved great difficulties in the cutting, and the most delicate and dexterous touches of the chisel. It is notable also as the first piece of statuary made in this country by an American sculptor.

It was the inspiration of several poems. Here there is space but for one, written by Miss C. F. Orne.

“ Yet pause we here, where, if the sculptor’s art
May ever soothe the mourner’s sorrowing heart,
It may console the friends who weep for thee,
Young, innocent, and gentle Emily.
We stand beside thy couch ; to hear thy breath
We almost pause ; and is it sleep or death
The cunning hand of art would seek to trace
On the sweet features of thy placid face ?
Through the oaks’ purple leaves the radiant light
Cheats for a moment the bewildered sight ;
And bathed in rosy hues upon the snow
Of thy fair cheek there rests a crimson glow ;
So still, so gentle thy repose and deep,
We almost fear to wake thee from that sleep.
Alas ! thy slumber is too deep, too still ;
’T is Death that on thy brow hath wrought his will.”

In Hawthorne’s “ Mosses from an Old Manse ” there is an allusion to *The Binney Child*. It occurs in the sketch called *The New Adam and Eve*. “ Such a child in whitest marble they have found among the monuments of Mount

Auburn. 'Sweetest Eve,' observes Adam, while hand in hand they contemplate this beautiful object, 'yonder sun has left us and the whole world is fading from our sight. Let us sleep as this lovely little figure is sleeping.'"

In the year 1841 Dexter removed his studio to Tremont Row. Tremont Row appears to have been at that time the favorite rendezvous of artists. Besides Dexter, there were the sculptors Greenough, Stevenson and Brackett; and the painters Alexander, Ames, Green, Holyoke, Hubbard, Ordway, Johnson, Alvan Clark and Thomas Ball.

Dexter had occupied Bromfield Hall for three years. There it was that he had wrought out his final art tendency. He had painted unto starvation; there he had experienced most of the trials of artists in their early career. He had known the proud man's contumely, the insolence of the rich even when sitting for their portraits. Men devoted to trade looked sharp lest they should be cheated, and were not above taking advantage of the poverty of the painter to dispute agreements, haggle over payment, or delay it until the fire went out in the studio and bread failed. These, however, were exceptional incidents in those three years. As ever in the Boston of that era, the helping hand was ready when merit or talent in any field was discovered. This local characteristic continues to this day, despite the sneers and fleers of other cities at Boston's provincialism and self-esteem. But in the increase of its population, the multiplication of its interests, it sometimes happens that an obscure and promising talent is neglected for the pursuit of a more general and noisy philanthropy. The slums and hospitals are

now, among the wealthy classes, the rivals of art and literature.

Dexter's chief memory and associations with Bromfield Hall were as the spot where his real genius first disclosed itself and turned him from painting to sculpture. Had he remained a painter, it might have been said that he was such from an early incitement and emulation of his friend Alexander. When he abandoned it for a profession toward which he had never looked, it is evident there was in him a genuine art-instinct and capacity for a particular line of work for which painting was but a preparation. I venture to think that in some respects blacksmithing was the more profitable preliminary to sculpture.

In memory of all its glad and unhappy days, Dexter left on the wall of his first studio some verses expressive of his feelings, which have been preserved and are here printed:—

Is this the place where once there came
Those strange imaginings,
Those mimic wreaths of crowning fame
Borne on delusive wings
Along thy dark and sombre wall,
Old Hall?

Thy cornice broad and ceiling high
Seem toned with melancholy;
The aspiration and the sigh,
Though sometimes breathed in folly,
Ascending found thy place too small,
Old Hall.

Thy windows looking to the north —
Always a lovely light —
Forbade all powers to tempt me forth
By keeping far from sight
Those views that might the mind enthrall,
Old Hall.

Thy votary, art, tried here awhile
All forms to limn, to paint
(While nature sat with pleasing smile),
Of sinner and of saint;
The effort hung against thy wall,
Old Hall.

Oh, who can tell what thou hast known,
The secrets thou art keeping?
But must thou speak? Then truly own,
When I am silent sleeping,
What thou hast seen or heard — tell all,
Old Hall.

He had not been long in his new studio on Tremont Row when Charles Dickens made his first visit to this country, in 1842. He sat to Dexter for a bust. There was a very interesting notice of this sitting in the "Atlantic Monthly" for October, 1870, contributed by Dickens' private secretary, G. P. Putnam, which is here reprinted. The scene as described was on the first morning that Mr. Putnam began his duties as secretary, and took place at the Tremont House, Boston's most frequented hotel about 1842.

"On Friday morning I was there at nine o'clock, the time appointed. Mr. and Mrs. Dickens had their meals

in their own rooms, and the table was spread for breakfast. Soon they came in, and, after a cheerful greeting, I took my place at a side-table, and wrote as he ate his breakfast, and meanwhile conversed with Mrs. Dickens, opened his letters, and dictated his answers to me.

"In one corner of the room Dexter, the sculptor, was earnestly at work modelling a bust of Mr. Dickens. Several others of the most eminent artists of our country had urgently requested Mr. Dickens to sit to them for his picture and bust, but having consented to do so to Alexander and Dexter, he was obliged to refuse all others for want of time.

"While Mr. Dickens ate his breakfast, read his letters, and dictated the answers, Dexter was watching with the utmost earnestness the play of every feature, and comparing his model with the original. Often during the meal he would come to Dickens with a solemn, business-like air, stoop down and look at him sideways, pass round and take a look at the other side of his face, and then go back to his model and work away for a few minutes; then come again and take another look, and go back to his model; soon he would come again with his calipers and measure Dickens' nose, and go and try it on the nose of the model; then come again with the calipers and try the width of the temples, or the distance from the nose to the chin, and back again to his work, eagerly shaping and correcting his model. The whole soul of the artist was engaged in his task, and the result was a splendid bust of the great author. Mr. Dickens was highly pleased with it, and repeatedly alluded to it during his stay as a very successful work of art.

"Alexander's picture and Dexter's bust of Dickens should be exhibited at this time, that those who never saw him in his young days may know exactly how he looked. The bust by Dexter has the rare merit of action, and in every respect represents the features, attitude and look of Charles Dickens."

How it impressed Mrs. Dickens may be seen from a letter which she addressed to the artist soon after her arrival in New York: —

MY DEAR MR. DEXTER, — I did not see you before I left Boston, and had not an opportunity of expressing to you how much I was delighted with your bust of my husband, which I think is a beautiful likeness. I should much like our English friends to see it, and hope for an early cast.

CATHERINE DICKENS.

I will also add here a confirmation of the good opinion concerning this bust by Prof. C. C. Felton, one of Dickens' most intimate friends in this country, in a little note to the sculptor.

"Ever since I saw your admirable bust of Charles Dickens, the best and most characteristic likeness that has ever been made of him, I have considered you the best, or certainly one of the best portrait-sculptors of our time."

Copies of this bust were on exhibition in all the principal cities of the country, and many were sold, especially in New York City and Philadelphia. Wherever Dickens gave readings, there were agencies for the sale of it. Dickens' presence advertised it, and that in turn advertised Dickens. Dickens' strongly marked features made

an unusually good subject to put into portrait-sculpture. Here is the author with all his energy, fun and pathos concentrated in the features. It was exhibited in London and won applause from the art critics. But portrait-sculpture has this sad impediment to an artist's permanent reputation; namely, the great man of to-day is not the great man of to-morrow, and too often they sink into obscurity together. Marble nor bronze nor canvas can long delay the extinction of the too fond estimates of our contemporaries. And yet it is the vanity and pride of men that make possible the existence of the artist until he can free himself from their trammels and give himself wholly to ideals and beauty. It was toward these that Dexter constantly worked, constantly longed to devote himself. Simple man that he was, faithful to every duty and obligation, he had to do what his hand found to do, and wait as he could for the coveted opportunity to choose his own subjects. It was early recognized that he had a remarkable felicity in obtaining a lifelike presentation of the living face. As to pose there can hardly be such a thing in a bust. Form is the chief object; and through that must be expressed whatever characteristics individualize the subject. Wanting the light of the eyes, the presence of which in the painted portrait gives the spectator some idea of the inward spirit, marble must depend on such other accessories as art can supply for producing effects. The chief difference between sculpture and painting is the advantage of the round over the flat surface. On this account a statue seems more real than a canvas. We can walk around it; we see behind the face. We see solids instead of surfaces, and behold the highest of all beauty, the beauty of form.

In his new studio Dexter continued making busts of Boston's merchant princes and distinguished professional men. Most of them were cut in marble, and are now in private houses, or in the public rooms of various institutions and libraries. They cannot be said to be entirely forgotten men, for Boston cherishes the memory of her prominent citizens beyond most cities, and ever and anon exhibits her marbles and canvases with commendable pride. But this generation has to be taught who and what they were. Let us name some of them, bring them from their hiding-places and remove the dust for their own sakes no less than for that of the sculptor. I have already mentioned several. There was Mayor Eliot, public-spirited and generous, chiefly recalled now as the father of the present head of Harvard University. As this was Dexter's first attempt at marble, he did not well know how to fix the price of the work. Mayor Eliot thought the price named too little, and made a liberal addition. Samuel Appleton was another of his generous patrons, one of the city's wealthiest men, founder of a renowned family, and father of that Tom Appleton who made Boston's *bon mots* for many a year; the friend of all writers and artists; practical friend of the latter, buying their pictures and sending them to Europe to study; a kind of Beacon Street Mæcenas of his city and time. Then there were the Lawrences, Amos and Abbott, for both of whom Dexter made busts. Both were cotton manufacturers, — one, Amos, much given to philanthropy, the other more devoted to public affairs. Edmund Dwight was another cotton manufacturer, founder of towns and villages on the Connecticut River. Robert C. Winthrop's bust should not be missing from the list, as he was accounted

one of Boston's ablest scholars and statesmen. Dr. Warren, Alvin Adams, Mr. Chickering, E. R. Mudge, and James L. Little, men of eminence in various ways, all sat for portrait-busts. His most distinguished patrons in Cambridge were George and Isaac Livermore; the former a merchant in wool and a great collector of the ancient documents of American history, a man of many virtues, beloved by everybody. Dexter made the busts of two Presidents of Harvard College, — Walker, the good, and Felton, the jovial Greek. Felton had a picturesque head of curly black hair; he was of conspicuous height and solid frame, and, barring his glasses, was a statuesque figure which marble only needed to imitate. Walker, who immediately preceded Felton as head of the college, not yet a university, had a most placid face, and seemed without and within a man "moulded in colossal calm." It is inconceivable that he could ever have experienced a temptation, which profited much to us young sinners of his reign. Perhaps because he was what he looked to be, his bust, more than most, conveys an excellent impression of his serene dignity and his pious and benignant nature.

IV

HIS VIEWS OF ART

DEXTER, as has been related, had an instinctive taste for art from his earliest childhood. He thought much about it before any knowledge or observation was his. Wonder, admiration and imagination came first. Long apprenticeship on a farm where everything was home-made, and then many more years at the trade of blacksmithing, had taught him the use of tools, had increased his natural skill, and trained his eye in those requirements of the forge which more than in almost any other kind of craft demand a quick and exact perception of shape. When the iron is hot, there is no time for measurements with rule or dividers, but the blow that will give the metal the required form must be delivered instantly. Hence the training of eye and hand; hence the hand must obey the eye until they work as one. Can it be doubted what a useful preparation this was when the iron was exchanged for marble, the anvil and hammer for mallet and chisel? But something more is needed to make a sculptor. That something is genius, which, however much it may be discussed and defined, remains incalculable. It is a mystery for which we should be thankful in this age when man's soul is about to be dissected and put in the crucible. Genius, however, has some

outward tokens which cannot be mistaken. It does not have to think about itself, nor plan nor study overmuch; it does the thing instinctively, and has seldom any self-estimate or sense of the excellence of its own work. I am aware this is the old Platonic theory, but as yet there is none better. If it be abnormal, a disease, as some recent psychologists claim, I would it were infectious. Modern artists are given over to theories and schools; they think and reason; and the crowd of amateurs keeps step with the schools and the masters. In Dexter's time there were no schools or masters in this country. He sculptured as he had blacksmithed and painted, with little training, and none of the modern aids. He had a native intelligence on which he mainly relied, like the fish of the deeper waters of the ocean that make the light by which they see. He gave himself to the most assiduous practice; and, reckoning the years of his labors and their results, he was one of the most industrious artists that ever lived. By nature a poet as well as a painter and sculptor, he came to have a clear conception of the relation of all the fine arts, and to know how deep in the heart of man is the chord to which their magic equally responds. In his own poetic attempts, however imperfect they are in form, there is the soul of the true poet. A lover of nature, he looked to her for instruction as well as inspiration. He studied her forms and proportions, — forms in detail, and proportions in the masses of forests and mountains as well as in the human figure. "The first lesson," he says, "an art pupil receives is to study nature. But how and where? Is it necessary to go to Europe? We have beauty of scenery and grandeur, sufficient for a lifetime study, and far better than copy-

ing the classic fragments which too often paralyze any originality which might have been developed in the quiet nakedness of a secluded studio. Go to Europe to become an artist! As well might the son of Erin go to Connecticut and expect there to become a Yankee. If that which he wishes to be, be not in him, it is in vain to vary his latitude. . . . Unless the sculptor has the image of beauty within himself, and knows where in the marble he can touch it with his magic chisel, he may chisel all the quarry in vain. Purely ideal works of sculpture in this country must go begging; for the present portrait-sculpture and busts are the sculptor's sole dependence."

Yet withal he had an idea that statues and busts should be something more than mere likenesses, — something, if possible, between the ideal and real, — a likeness, but with as much nobility as the subject's character would warrant, not as the eyes see him, but what the artist and public know him to be. As for the artist and poet, much is spoilt when they find anything that actually resembles their imaginings. For rich and free productivity, they must dwell in an ideal world of their own creation. This is in harmony with Greek ideas concerning art. The Thebans enacted a law commanding artists to make their copies more beautiful than the originals, if possible, and never less so. In a portrait-statue there may be idealization, but likeness should predominate. Judges in the Olympic games allowed a statue to every conqueror, which was intended to celebrate the event as much as the actor, and a portrait-statue was only permitted to him who had been thrice victorious. The Greeks, by strict laws, protected the principles of beauty, and thereby promoted its

manifestation in the generation of the race. Accustomed to see none but beautiful objects, their children were born with beautiful minds in perfect bodies.¹

Dexter was ambitious also to adhere to national character. "But what," he asks, "represents our national character? Have we a distinctive face, a peculiar costume?" He would have all representative of our republican institutions. The unadorned, the undraped marble comes to be at length, in the mind of every great artist, the highest conception of the aims and accomplishment of sculpture. Not an ell must be covered. The excellence of form must be shown in its purity. Herein it parts company with painting, and ever more widely. The undraped human figure on canvas is generally wanting in pudency; while in sculpture it is only the more chaste because it represents not individual but abstract beauty. Devoid of color, and of expression dependent upon color, marble conveys no idea of fleshliness. Both its whiteness and texture deprive it of any suggestion of warmth or life. The painter requires all possible accessories, and then does not always succeed in hiding an ugly or vacuous nudity, nor in adding anything to intrinsic grace and loveliness.

"The sinful painter drapes his goddess warm,
Because she still is naked, being dressed;
The godlike sculptor will not so deform
Beauty, which limbs and flesh enough invest."

Dexter's efforts in sculpturing ideal or mythological figures, when he had time and opportunity, gave him

¹ See Lessing's *Laocöon*.

unbounded delight. It was then he could rhapsodize and completely satisfy the aspirations of his poetic nature. He was not afraid to address poems to his own creations, feeling, as all creative power must, that whatever is called into life has then a separate existence quite apart from the workman, and is entitled to be honored by him. There is no egotism in this, but rather a recognition that the sculptor himself is only a finer clay in the hands of a diviner artist. His attitude is not that of a creator of his own work, but merely the instrument used in its creation. It is said that those who heard Tennyson read his own poems, and comment on their beauty, are agreed that it was such a natural, ingenuous manner in him that they felt in it nothing strange or egotistical. It was consonant with Dexter's simple, unsophisticated nature to enjoy the work of his own hands as one does his own children, which are his and not his. He has not given them life; he has only transmitted it; and this is what the artist does.

Dexter's life as an artist was solitary; as yet there were few critics, no art journals, no schools, and few collections of paintings and sculptures. The students of sculpture went to Europe, and generally remained there. Painting was mostly confined to portraits, and the painters, having exhausted one city, betook themselves to another. I have said there were no art critics. In all the notices of works of art in Dexter's time which I have seen there is unstinted and indiscriminate praise. There was a great desire to encourage art, and perhaps this was as good a way as any. Its practical encouragement had to come from private sources; neither the general government nor the States afforded patronage to any of the arts, except an occasional

order to architects. Dexter was a pioneer, and with his views of the advantage of staying at home and building up an American art, he was left to do the work, to carry out and to illustrate his views pretty much alone. The time is not yet for the appreciation of what he achieved in this direction. It may be depressing to think of him toiling in obscure studios in Boston and Cambridge with one great idea, to show that America might be the home of art, while his fellow-artists were flourishing in Rome and Florence amid classic models and societies where art was appreciated and honored; but in the end it will be found his way was right, and theirs mistaken. To make another Apollo or Venus is superfluous. They were good in their time, done once for all, representing the highest flight of idealism of a given period, and had better be broken up than breed ineffectual imitators. Stay at home, you who think you can paint or sculpture, mould a farmer-soldier at the Concord Bridge; or, if you cannot do as much, or find as stirring a subject, take an humbler one, as did J. G. Brown, who has devoted his brush to the apotheosis of the bootblack and newsboy of New York. If we have not gods and goddesses, we have *genre* subjects, and a few heroes and heroines, heroic scenes and events.

Having given Dexter's views sometimes in his own words and sometimes in my own, I will now continue the narrative of his life and works, briefly mentioning such of the latter as mark the more important steps in his career.

In 1840 he made a bust of his mother; and one has to stop a moment and try to think what must have been her reflections at seeing this son of hers, to whom she had forbidden

all the arts, now a sculptor, modelling her face which he had already painted. Further to invalidate her motherly warnings, it only needed that he should celebrate her in verse. But mothers are easily forgiven, and they forgive still more readily. We know that the cause of their infrequent mistakes is excess of affection. They can be proud of their disobedient sons when by contrary courses they achieve distinction.

In the same year he made the bust of Marcus Morton, Democratic governor of Massachusetts by one vote, Whiggery for some reason being out of usual favor. In the next year he put in marble the sturdy head of John Davis of Worcester, one of the most popular of Massachusetts governors, as is shown from the fact that thirty duplicates in plaster were ordered. He had not yet entirely given up the brush, and this same year there was exhibited at the Boston Athenæum a painting of the artist's two young daughters. From 1840 to 1845 I find that he made more than twenty-five busts and statues of living subjects, and one of the *Magdalene*, his first attempt in the ideal. In the next year, 1846, he made a bust of another Massachusetts worthy, Governor Briggs,—re-elected for seven years,—six other busts, and an elaborate mural monument in marble, representing *Grief*. From the suggestions of a Boston gentleman, George C. Shattuck, he undertook in 1847 to represent in marble a purely American subject, *The Backwoodsman*. A sum sufficient to enable him to begin the work was raised among his Boston patrons. When completed it was exhibited at the Boston Athenæum. Afterward it was removed to the sculptor's studio, and further labor was bestowed upon it. It is now at Wellesley

College, having been presented to that institution by the artist's daughter, Mrs. Anna E. Douglass. Dexter was always most successful in modelling children, perhaps in none more so than in those of J. P. Cushing's son and daughter. Although portrait-statues, they have much ideal grace and beauty. The girl is holding a book, and the statue was called, when exhibited, *The First Lesson*; that of the little boy, who is watching a squirrel, was called *Observation*. He next made in marble four busts of other members of the Cushing family, in half size, which were much commended for their classic beauty.

From 1850 to 1856 he executed twenty-one busts, besides an ideal figure, *The Yankee Boy*, one mural monument, and a dog in freestone. The busts were mostly of men and women in and around Boston. In the list I observe one of Miss C. F. Orne, a Cambridge poet, Anson Burlingame, and several once celebrated persons. Many of these were duplicated for friends, or for institutions with which they happened to be connected. In this, the above period, Dexter began his studies for the statue of General Joseph Warren, the hero of Bunker Hill, which were completed and the statue cut sometime before June, 1857. It was set up and dedicated on the anniversary of the battle, June 17, 1857. Ten thousand people attended the dedication, at which Edward Everett delivered the oration, in the course of which he paid an eloquent tribute to the statue and its maker. The statue is seven feet in height, and it is dressed in the costume of the Revolutionary period, modelled from a suit once worn by John Hancock. The right hand rests on his sword, and the left is raised as if addressing the patriot soldiers. In this work Dexter

found what he had always longed for, — a purely American subject in the man and the event, a hero at his highest moment and tragic death, and in every respect the most memorable battle of the Revolution.

From the completion of the statue of Warren to 1859 he continued making portrait-busts, among which I notice that of Henry Wilson, a famous anti-slavery agitator, and United States Senator from Massachusetts for many terms, and later Vice-President of the United States.

In 1857 his wife died; and, just before beginning a tour through the United States, he married Mrs. Martha Billings, of Millbury, Massachusetts.

In 1859 Dexter conceived the idea of making a complete collection of busts of all the State governors and the President, James Buchanan, forming, as it were, an official gallery of the period. The Civil War was near at hand, nearer indeed than anybody suspected, and thus the undertaking was more hazardous than Dexter realized, and at the same time more important than he could have foreseen, as a record of that momentous convulsion. His plan was to visit the home or official residence of State governors and model them from life, cast them in plaster, and, when desired, take orders for duplicates in plaster or marble, and finally to secure some place and some purchaser for the entire collection, so that it might be shown and preserved as part of the personal history of the country at that date. He also had hopes that the individual States would desire to have a copy in marble of their governors for that year, to be placed in their several capitols. But he expected to bear, and indeed did bear, all the preliminary expenses himself; and they were not light,

considering that he had to travel twenty thousand miles by rail, sea and stages, covering every State then in the Union except Oregon and California, and pay his hotel bills and transportation of materials for modelling and casting. It was an immense and difficult enterprise, unique in plan, and almost as uncertain in detail as a battle, which, however well ordered, is liable to unforeseen exigencies and accidents. It was also fraught with some personal peril, of which Dexter at the time seems to have been happily unconscious. Northerners were looked upon with suspicion, and were exposed to insult and assault.

The South was ripe for rebellion, and the sculptor might in some places be mistaken for a spy or an anti-slavery agitator. But Dexter shared in the general blindness of the time, and confided that the political party to which he belonged would hold the Union peacefully together. So he went forth with the trustfulness of a child, and the enthusiasm which fifty years had not quenched, but only made more effectual by the strengthening of his energy and his will. As it turned out, his collection when completed had an unsuspected value of great historic interest. Some of the governors who happened to be in office in 1859 and 1860 were remarkable men. The crisis in our civil affairs gave them an opportunity to show their strength or their weakness. A few of them, by foresight and prudence, certainly saved the general government from immediate overthrow at the outbreak of the Rebellion. Several of the ablest became Lincoln's counsellors and military leaders; and their general activity in furnishing troops for the army, and in numerous other ways holding up the hands of the hard-pressed government at Washing-

ton, deserved statues of gold. But their place in history was not yet won or even suspected when Dexter set out on his travels to model the busts of these unconscious worthies, — men hitherto hardly known beyond the confines of their several States, soon, however, to be distinguished everywhere as the "War Governors" of the North and South land.

He went forth armed with letters of general introduction from Edward Everett and others, a few tools, and a barrel of clay. These letters of introduction simply mentioned his purpose, and commended him as a skilful artist. When he had made the bust of one governor, he obtained from him an introduction to the next he intended to visit. In this way his path was usually made smooth, and on such flattering errands courtesies were not wanting on the part of State officials. Often he made his home in the families of the governors while at work, and thus acquired friends, and had uncommon opportunities of observing the manners, customs and ideas of the better classes in different sections of the country. In the progress of his work he had also the advantage of the suggestions and criticisms by the immediate friends of his subject, and was able to study him at other times than when in the sitter's chair. He seems to have endeared himself to these official families wherever he went, as was to be expected in a man so naturally modest, genial and intelligent. But, withal, there were many trials incident to his undertaking. He was never sure of finding his governor at home, or at leisure to give him the necessary number of sittings. On one occasion he found a governor just dead. Others were rude, and had to be conciliated; and, strange as it may

seem, some few did not think so well of themselves as to wish to have perpetuated their gubernatorial heads. The prevailing persuasion in such cases was that the governor of an adjoining State had ordered a bust in plaster or marble, or the State had ordered one for its capitol. There were occasionally humorous experiences; and besides the opportunities for a close study of official personages and their families and subordinates, his long journeys on the rivers and lakes of the West and South and overland stages furnished an ample and varied field for observation of human nature in many new and strange guises. Everything, in fact, was new and strange to him who had seldom been out of New England: the scenery, the men and women, their manner of life, their food, their characteristics of speech, and their religious and political opinions. In respect to the latter, he found perfect unanimity in hatred of the North, and an ardent desire to be separated from it.

In his home letters he exclaims much against the prevailing diet of pork, and says that it was impossible to escape in public or private houses the fumes of tobacco, the tobacco chewers and whiskey drinkers. On the question of slavery he was inclined to be reticent, and I gather the impression he wished others to be. For the most part he saw its better side, and shut his eyes upon its evils. Like many other good and true men of his time, old enough to have heard in their youth what our independence had cost, he was willing to compromise for the sake of the Union, and prepared to sacrifice almost everything for its preservation. Thus his political principles and his natural conciliatory spirit carried him easily through the enterprise

he had undertaken. He felt the danger to art and to civilization in the agitations which disturbed the country during the ten years previous to the rebellion. As yet he had no idea of the outcome, and little felt while travelling from one Southern State to another that he was in the enemy's country. He enjoyed the surprises of the scenery, the novel habits of Southern and Western men, and found time and opportunities for many acute philosophical reflections.

I shall accompany him on his travels, condensing as much as possible the record he has left in some two hundred pages of letters and notes. I find one brief memorandum with which this part of the narrative may begin: "One governor treated me like a barber come to shave him, showing me no attention at all. One made a dinner party for me, inviting all the distinguished men of the State. Four were very generous. One declared he would never sit for his bust; but he did, and proved the best man I had. Nine were indifferent, but treated me with respect. Sixteen did everything they could for me in the way of attentions. Three were bachelors; six were widowers; and two had been married three times."

In this epitome of the artist in the midst of the governors one has a glimpse of his difficulties and of their varied dispositions.

The first bust in the group was that of James Buchanan, President from 1856 to 1860; and we find Dexter in Washington on a June morning in 1859, seeking for an interview with the President. He was soon established in a room in the White House, where he set up his clay, and the President gave him daily sittings, punctually at

eleven o'clock in the morning. No bust of him had ever been made before, and he was surprised that an artist coming from Massachusetts, where he was so unpopular, should wish to make one. "We have some crazy heads," Dexter remarked. "All are," said the President. He describes his sitter as six feet and one inch in height, with a double chin. He dined with the President on one occasion, and appears to have been treated with great cordiality, walking and talking with him; but there is no record of what was said. The President talked, as great personages are wont, on commonplaces, — and he was never credited with being a genius. He could not save the country from secession, and did not try very hard. His policy was for conciliation and compromise, for the "conquer your prejudices," as Webster had advised.

Governor Buckingham, of Connecticut, was his first subject among the State governors. His home was in Norwich, and the artist's impressions were more of the beauty of that ancient town than of the people he met. Here, as elsewhere, I can only refer briefly and in their order to the visits he made to the governors of the States. I am taking my materials for this portion of Dexter's life from diaries and family letters, in which he gives very particular descriptions of the situation and points of interest in the towns, cities, and country through which he passed. To give them in full would make a quite complete itinerary of the United States.

He proceeded then to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, to the hospitable house of Gov. Ichabod Goodwin, the stanch old Whig, owner of ships, himself long a sailor, the pride of the little city by the sea. His figure was that of a solid

square post; but the artist had to do only with a face beaming with benevolence, firmness, and a quaint, old-fashioned humor. With his honors thick upon him, and driving the finest span of horses in the town, he was through and through a sailor.

On arrival at his residence, the artist found the next governor, Turner, of Rhode Island, absent at a clam-bake, as was natural in the home of the Rhode Island clam. Governor Turner was a merchant in moderate circumstances, and his house was so low studded the sculptor could find no room in it suitable for modelling, so he had to secure one in the hotel where he was stopping. He describes his bed here as just wide enough for one sleeper, but not long enough, and the room but three times the width of the bed. He saw a great deal of Republican simplicity in this town of Warren, notably in the house and household of the governor. One thing interested him more than anything else, — it was one of Alexander's earliest pictures, a portrait of the governor's wife. He takes his leave of this place, saying that he had secured a piece of the rock on which Roger Williams landed.

He is next in North Bennington, Vermont, about to model the head of Governor Hall, who had a peculiar face, but such as was easy to imitate. Here he finds more republican simplicity in a one-storied house, and two meals on the Sabbath. He already anticipates enlarging his circle of acquaintance and field of observation in pursuing his design of making busts of all the governors. At Bennington he was unusually active; besides his special work, he wrote a poem of thirty-six

lines, and many letters, visited the Bennington battle-field, and admired the mountains and the Vermont sheep.

October 11, 1859, he arrived in Albany, New York, to model the bust of Gov. E. D. Morgan, "a man six feet two and a Cromwell face." Mrs. Morgan was disappointed in the appearance of the artist; "she expected to see him in a long beard and uncombed hair, a slouch hat and cloak." He was at once established in the governor's mansion, and in a few days the bust was made, and was so satisfactory that it was ordered in marble. From Albany he journeyed to Augusta, Maine, where Governor Morrill awaited him. Here he saw the new moon over his right shoulder one evening, and it was followed by his usual good luck, for the governor's family proved very kind and agreeable; he enjoyed fine home music, and saw the youngest daughter pirouette; and though the governor's face was hard to take, he succeeded by keeping him reading while he handled the clay.

Thus far he had been able to touch at the home port in his travels in the nearer States. But now he starts on his long journey West and South, into a new world of men and manners, and is to suffer much by separation from his family. In a word, he was often homesick. In November, 1859, he reaches Columbus, the capital of Ohio, where he is to make the bust of Gov. Salmon P. Chase, subsequently Secretary of the Treasury in Lincoln's first Cabinet and Chief-Justice of the United States. Governor Chase was a tall, well-proportioned man, with a full, cheerful face, and withal great dignity. He describes the domestic head of the house, Miss Kate Chase, as a very remarkable woman. She was then nineteen years old, accomplished,

and, as she informed Dexter, unappreciated, — a common complaint among young men and women, but not incurable when one gets to Washington and is the daughter of a high official. John Brown's body was not yet mouldering in the ground, but his gallows was erecting, and the artist found all around him admirers and adherents of the old hero. "Governor Chase's model men are Charles Sumner, Wendell Phillips and Theodore Parker." The bust was a great success; and, when finished, Dexter remarked, "He will do to be President now."

From Columbus he travelled to Cincinnati, where he had a bit of pleasant personal experience. Going into an art store, he fell into talk with the proprietor, to whom he introduced himself, found that he was known by reputation and that his interlocutor had seen and admired the statue of General Warren; upon which Dexter makes the comment that it was the "first genuine, honest praise I ever received for that work."

At Frankfort, Kentucky, he modelled the bust of Governor Magoffin. Here he entered for the first time the land of slaves, fine stock and rich lands. The governor's house was full of black servants and he had nine small children. He made a dinner party for the artist, all the dignitaries of the State attending. There were wonder and surprise at the man who could make an image of their great governor in a week, drink no wine, nor smoke, not even swear. And so the clay head was ordered in marble as a tribute to art and Puritanism. On leaving Frankfort, he visited the Mammoth Cave, of which he wrote a very pretty description, and thought he found confirmation of his theories as to how the world was made. In December

he arrived in Nashville, Tennessee, and began more and more to note the contrasts in everything to what he had left behind in New England. Here were unthrift and untidiness, and lack of most comforts to which he was accustomed. All menial service was performed by slaves, "the happiest of human beings. If there is slavery, it is the master who is in bondage." In a Nashville hotel his bed had but one sheet, "the other gone to be washed." Perhaps this is why he arose at five o'clock in the morning and began setting up his clay. At the hotel he was the chum of Governor Harris, except that they slept on separate beds. But they used the same washbowl and towel, the latter long and on a roller, the same pair of tongs for their fires, and one candlestick for both; and when Dexter needed an extra one, he whittled a candle-end to fit a bottle, and so got a light to write a letter home. Everything in Tennessee at this date was in a primitive condition. On Sunday he heard a preacher who punctuated his brimstone sentences by squirting tobacco juice. On the morrow this same preacher was to be installed as head of a college.

From Nashville, Dexter retraced his steps to Richmond, Virginia, with the intention of making a bust of Governor Wise. He was unfortunate enough to find him just taking leave of his military aids, and to hear him make a bitter speech against the North. So the bust had to be given up for that time, and he proceeded to Raleigh, North Carolina, in search of Governor Ellis, whom he describes as a gentleman, and his wife a lady, pious, accomplished and saying grace at her own table. Governor Ellis proved a good subject, and the artist thought

his bust the best he had produced thus far. I note at this point that, on leaving North Carolina, Governor Ellis gave him an official letter as a protection against dangers to which he might be exposed as a Northerner. This was well, as he was about leaving for South Carolina in search of Governor Gist. On the way he fell in with two women, also going to see Governor Gist, to sue for the pardon of a husband and brother. Dexter learned all the particulars concerning their errand, and himself introduced them, making a little plea for a pardon. It was successful; and he says that having touched so many governors' heads, he was glad at last to have the opportunity to touch the heart of one. As a faithful narrator, I must set down in a plain style these small incidents, which show a man's nature as well as if told more picturesquely. Art must wait on humanity. I will here insert a sentence or two from one of his letters while at the home of Governor Gist, as showing his method of study for a bust. "I have now spent two days here; I have studied the governor's features closely, the index of the human heart, and fixed the impression on the clay. I have already decided what the man is, and what the bust will be." Perhaps it was this penetration of character which enabled him to make such admirable likenesses. South Carolina was for secession, and Madame Gist remarked to the sculptor that the bust would be excellent for Northerners to recognize her husband by when they were ready to hang him.

One of the common dishes on her table was robins, which Dexter could not relish, and of which he did not partake, for thinking of those that were so dear and pleasant

to him among the pear-trees in his own small garden at home. One of the happy incidents of his visit at Governor Gist's occurred while they were walking over the plantation together. They came to a blacksmith's shop, where two of the governor's slaves were making horse-shoes and horseshoe nails. Dexter took the hammer and rod, and showed how he used to do it; and he also made a shoe, for which Governor Gist did the striking. Finally he took his departure, but not before he had read to the governor and his family the whole of his diary which he had kept while staying with them. He had not lately received any letters from home, and began to fear they had been intercepted, as by this time communications between the North and South were matters of suspicion, and he himself would have been in peril without passports from one Southern governor to another. Nevertheless he bravely registered himself from Boston whenever he stopped at a hotel.

From South Carolina, Dexter journeyed on to Milledgeville, Georgia, by stages and cars, the later going at the same pace as the former. At a way station he bought two Northern apples, and wanted to talk with them, they so reminded him of home. *En route* into Georgia, his trunks went astray, so that when he arrived and found Governor Brown ready to sit for his bust, he was obliged to go first to a pit and dig his clay, and then mould the bust with his fingers. Truly, as he says, he did not carry his art in a trunk. His diary of the days in Georgia is mostly filled with descriptions of the country, and praises of Governor Brown and his pleasant family. He was treated here as a gentleman by a gentleman, and went on

his way to Florida rejoicing that the heart of man is not changed by latitude and longitude.

At a station called Miconopy, in Florida, he was still twelve miles from the residence of Governor Perry. This was traversed by stage-coach, and it was night when he arrived, and the family was in bed. The more embarrassing was the situation when he learned that the governor had not received his letter, which, as usual, he had sent on in advance. But Southern hospitality could be trusted to make a bed and light a fire for an unexpected guest. His experiences and observations in Florida are interesting in themselves, but all the more as showing how alert his mind and eye were; and it would be instructive to quote them had I the space at my disposal. But I am reluctantly compelled to abridge much that would be of interest to readers.

From Florida, he retraced his steps through South Carolina to Montgomery, the capital of Alabama, where he made a bust of the State executive, Governor Moore. Thence he steamed down the Alabama River, and up the Mississippi, bound for Jackson, Mississippi, where he put Governor Pettus into clay, and received an order from the State for a marble copy.

Governor Wickliffe, of Louisiana, was his next subject, in whose family of daughters, cousins and aunts he appears to have taken great delight, telling them about his theories of creation, which they thought most interesting and heterodox, and teaching them how to make a rice pudding. Next he starts for Texas, to pay his respects to Gov. Sam Houston. It was a long, tedious journey across the Gulf to Galveston, and on the way the steamer en-

countered a norther. They were steering due west by the new moon and the evening star. Then followed a long stage ride of one hundred and thirty-five miles to Austin, through sand and scrub oak. Dexter thought Sam Houston a great man, and such he was, — great in his place and time, — and a giant in stature. It was probably the first time any artist had penetrated Texas. While at work on the bust of the governor, Dexter was constantly surrounded by a crowd of curious spectators, talking, smoking and wondering. He completed his model in two or three days by working early and late, for he began to be hungry for home, toward which, when he should leave Texas, he would be approaching. Having now seen so much land, and heard so much in praise of the peculiar advantages of different places, and especially in Texas, of its extent, he came to the conclusion that one place was about as good as another; "that a man with a good farm in New England is as well off as he would be with a good farm anywhere else; and a man with a poor farm, or none at all, is better off!"

In Texas, he found no sweet milk, no meat but pork, and Northern apples ten dollars a barrel. And yet there were herds of cattle numberless, and sheep whitened the wide plains. A dirk in the belt and a pipe in the mouth were at this period the insignia of the true Texan.

In due time he arrived in New Orleans. It was March, 1860, and the Carnival season. He saw the processions and masquerades, and enough to satisfy his taste for the picturesque, and more than enough to disgust his sense of the proprieties. His next objective point was Little Rock, Arkansas, where he was to meet Gov. Elias N. Conway,

whom he discovered in bed; in three days and twelve hours he had him ready to stand up awake on his pedestal.

Leaving Little Rock, he once more reached the Mississippi River, and this time put it in "lines." At Helena, on a wharf-boat, he saw fastened to its side a long pole, and on it a placard to this effect: "This is the rail on which the people of Helena rode the Abolitionists." He was now going up the Mississippi to St. Louis, for the purpose of modelling the governor of Missouri, but, hearing of the death of Governor Bissell, of Illinois, he changed his plan and hurried on to Springfield. He found the Capitol and everybody in mourning. He says of himself at this point: "I have taken such an interest in these governors that it almost seems as if no one could mourn the decease of any one of them more than myself." He established himself in the house of the late governor, worked on the bust in his chamber, and thought that so he would be nearer to the deceased man than elsewhere. This gives an unexpected glimpse of Dexter's fine perceptions in his relying upon them to gather from the intangible atmosphere of a man's daily surroundings a knowledge of his inner being. But there were difficulties in modelling a bust from daguerreotypes, and those not of a recent date. Besides these, his only other guide was the dead governor's hat. In the end, after the three hardest days' labor he had ever done, he succeeded in obtaining a likeness which pleased every one except Mrs. Bissell. Nor was this an exceptional instance of his sensitiveness, for he remarked to a friend on one occasion that he was so keenly receptive to the spiritual atmosphere of his sitters that if one chanced to be mercenary or unprincipled he was unable to drive away

the antagonistic and disagreeable impressions produced, which proved a serious hindrance to his work; whereas, if the sitter had a lofty, fine nature, he felt exalted and seemed to catch visions of beauty hovering about the head.

On April 2d he arrived in Jefferson City, Missouri, and made a bust of Governor Stewart, which he thought one of his best. Again he was on the Mississippi River, and, by the time his journey ended, he had traversed every navigable mile of it. He stopped at Keokuk, Iowa, expecting to meet Governor Lowe there; but he was at Davenport, to which place he journeyed on, and there caught and modelled his governor. The Wisconsin governor was in Washington, and the artist had to omit him for the time being; and though he went to St. Paul, Minnesota, there is no account of his doings there, nor in Michigan, nor Indiana.

From April to June he was in pursuit of the governors of Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, Delaware and New Jersey. National affairs were approaching a crisis, and the State officials were moving about, holding consultations, now at their own capitals and then at Washington; and Dexter found it difficult to make them name or keep their appointments. He had many amusing experiences, as, for instance, in Milford, Delaware, where, although bearing a letter of introduction from the governor to his wife, the timid woman would not give him a room in which to set up his clay until her husband should arrive. However, she cooked him a dinner of bacon and eggs with her own hands. After a year and some months of a chiefly pork diet, he came to the conclusion that the South and

West would never flourish in strength or morals until they gave up Mr. Pig, Mistress Tobacco, and Sir Bourbon.

By dint of much travelling, he succeeded in catching Governor Packer of Pennsylvania, Governor Hicks of Maryland, and Governor Newell of New Jersey. Governor Randall, of Wisconsin, he overtook in Washington, and modelled him in four sittings. At the same time and place he found Governor Wise, of Virginia, began his bust, but found him so violent in temper that no clay could stand it, and so he dismissed him. However, the bust was afterwards completed. Governor Wise, who had but lately hung John Brown, was in high feather, and "wished now to hang all Northerners, especially their governors, and make a St. Bartholomew's Day for their clergy." Dexter describes him as a man who had chewed tobacco since he was five years old, thin and angular, and somewhat resembling the knife and fork stuck up beside plates at country hotels.

On June 24, 1860, we come to the close of his adventures, travels and labors in the enterprise of securing the likenesses of the State governors just before the secession of the Southern States. He sums up his reflections on this undertaking in these words: "I have been reflecting upon the remarkable exemption I have had from accidents during all these thousand miles I have travelled, and from perils seen and unseen, and feel that I have been protected by Divine mercy. I have not carried pistol or dirk about me, nor had them nearer than in the pockets of my fellow-passengers in stage-coaches and steamers. I have never hesitated to walk the streets in any Southern or Western city at any hour of the night or day when business made

it necessary for me to do so, and I have never been insulted by look, word, or action, unless by Governor Wise; but, on the contrary, I have been treated with kindness and civility. I have not lost a single hour on account of sickness."

He might have added that he had seen his own country more thoroughly and under better auspices than any man of his time, and though not wholly conscious of it, at a period of great historical importance. His lips were sealed on much that it would have been interesting to have heard, as his letters were liable to be opened, and he had to be cautious. He hints in more than one place that he heard secrets not to be written; and these must have been such as he gathered in confidential talks with State officials in regard to the questions already violently agitating the whole country. Whatever he gained in the practice of portrait-sculpture, which generally had to be done under the most unfavorable circumstances, in other matters he had rare opportunities for the study of human nature and observation of climate, productions, scenery, rivers, geology, cities, and towns, and all that meets the eye in new lands. To these he was awake, and was constantly watchful how men lived, not only in governors' houses, but in others; their employments, wages, food, rents, prices of land and domestic animals, not less than their habits and opinions. He always found somebody to talk with on land or water, — somebody who could tell him something and answer questions. When alone, his pen was busy in writing out in prose or verse descriptions of what he saw. It was not always that he could find in hotels or steamers a table to write upon; a washstand,

window-ledge, or box sufficed. He never failed to attend some church wherever the Sabbath found him, — Baptist, Methodist, or Episcopalian; he had respect for various forms of religion, and in their places of worship he took note of the special characteristics in different communities in the Southern and Western States. I must record that he preferred his native New England to any other part of the country, and his own home to the royal houses of State governors. His heart remained untravelled; his mind became broadened, quickened and more philosophical.

What was to be the fruit of all this labor in making the busts of thirty-one governors? His chief hope was to have the complete collection gathered at Washington for preservation as a historical marble record of the years 1859 and 1860. He had made the collection at his own expense, and hoped for some return. The war came on, which made the busts in some sense more valuable, especially at the moment when there was a danger that these governors would be the last of a united country. Not only are laws silent *inter arma*, but art is in abeyance, and the sculptor's hopes were extinguished. The collection was exhibited for a short time in the Doric Hall of the Massachusetts State House, until the busts of the governors of the Southern States became obnoxious to the public and in some danger of being destroyed, when they were removed to the sculptor's own gallery. The collection is now at the Smithsonian Institute at Washington. Those that were transferred to marble are in private houses and in various public buildings and institutions of the different States. I ought to mention that, seeing no prospect of purchase by the general government, he made some efforts

to have the individual States order their governors in marble. I find among his papers an appeal of this kind to his own State, in which he refers to the value of the remains of classic art, and rightly estimates the importance that future times may attach to the busts of public men at the opening of the war.

In vain were appeals for appropriations of public money while the loyal States were straining every resource to equip and send to the front their quotas of troops. Dexter gave up the attempt, and appears never again to have renewed it. He retired to his studio and executed such orders as were offered. During the next ten years he made no less than thirty-three busts, cutting them all in marble, and one ideal work, *The Nymph of the Ocean*. Among the busts were those of Longfellow and Agassiz, and they are as excellent as any he ever made. Both these men in their maturity had striking heads, easy of recognition in any assembly. The artist's hand, now at the zenith of its power, rendered them with all their natural strength and noble pose, and at the same time caught somewhat of that inward spirit which made them what they were. I find so just and acute a notice of the Longfellow bust at the time when first exhibited, in 1868, that I insert it here.

CAMBRIDGE, Nov. 6, 1868.

MY DEAR SIR, — I want to express to you my very great admiration for your bust of Mr. Longfellow. As a portrait-bust, it could not be better. It not only satisfies one's memory of his countenance, but it recalls details of feature and expression too minute to be remembered distinctly, yet recognized the moment they are seen. Yet more, it gives the history of his face.

I first knew him when he was a slender young man, with almost feminine grace and beauty of countenance, but with no majesty or power. Before I saw your bust I should have said that he had nothing of his early face in his present countenance. But you have caught it lurking under those grand and massive features, and have brought it into the light, so that his youth came back to my remembrance while I was looking at your marble more vividly than it had for all these years in which I have been living with him at Cambridge. Now this, I think, is a mark of a genuine art work. A mere copyist on canvas or in the marble may represent in likeness the countenance as it is; but only the artist can penetrate to the half-buried traits of the countenance that was.

For idealizing, Mr. Longfellow left you very little room. But one who had never seen him might easily take your bust as embodying an artist's ideal of an epic or tragic poet, and I am sure that there could be no question of the grandeur of the idea or of the consummate skill of its embodiment.

I heartily congratulate you on your eminent success and am, my dear sir,

Very truly yours,

A. P. PEABODY.

HENRY DEXTER, Esq.

I find among his papers what was probably his last appeal for an opportunity to devote himself to purely ideal works. It is in a private letter to Hon. Samuel Hooper, in 1871, at that time, if I mistake not, a member of Congress from Boston. It was a confidential letter, and in it he speaks from his heart. It is a confession of his achievements, his aspirations, his disappointments. A touch of sadness lingers in it, as if, after all his struggles

and labors, his modelling of so many of the illustrious obscure, little were left but a sigh of regret.

“After leaving you this morning, it occurred to me it might be well and proper to say in a note a few things I might or might not say at our next interview.

“Every man who undertakes anything must have some assurance of his own ability to do it. You have this assurance. I have it. When I came to Boston thirty-five years ago I had the assurance I could make a bust — and I made it. I had that same feeling that I could make a statue — and I made *The Binney Child* at Mount Auburn. This was the first marble statue in the United States made by a native American artist who had not been to Europe. There were no resident sculptors here then, and there never had been. I also had the assurance that I could make a marble statue of a *Backwoodsman*, and I made it, overcoming difficulties enough to discourage and dishearten any man. It was the same with the statue of General Warren at Bunker Hill. I have made two hundred busts. Fearing the public would think I could make nothing else, I produced *The Ocean Nymph*. I have had no assistance, no foreign aid. You have not seen me in the streets idle. I have now but a few years left at most. The work of my life I have most desired to do I have not done. I know I could do it had I the means to pay my expenses while at work. Could I sell my *Backwoodsman* or my *Nymph* I could meet expenses, and devote myself to ideal sculpture. My *Governors* were a total loss financially, after eighteen months' time spent in the undertaking and twenty thousand miles of travel. It impoverished me for years. I did hope to be thought of in Washington, and that some of the orders for public works of art would have been awarded me. But no, not one. I feel now in a hurry, for the day cometh with all men when labor must cease, the wearied

hand must rest. But I cannot labor without pay, without orders, at this time of life. I feel strong now, and I wish to be busy, that my decline of life may be free from want, or the fear of want."

This is the old cry of artist and poet for the means and the opportunity to do some work of noble note however long deferred.

"Old age hath yet his honor and his toil;
Death closes all; but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note may yet be done
Not unbecoming men that strove with gods."

In the above letter he makes allusion to *The Nymph*. This was his last ideal work. It was exhibited in Boston in 1870, and won much commendation from the newspaper critics and correspondents. *The Nymph* is of the water, a young Thetis, represented as reclining on the seashore. She leans upon a shell, and there are other emblems of the sea. The face and head are modelled on Greek lines. The half human and half divine are blended in the expressive mythological manner of the classic artists. Several poems were addressed to *The Nymph*, one by the sculptor himself, trying to convey in words what his chisel silently proclaimed. There was another containing some fine lines, a few of which are here given:—

"The silver sands that press her white feet fondly,
The waves that linger with caressing touches,
Claim not her eye or thought or conscious presence.
Her lip is touched by tender, tremulous sadness,
Forecasting human love and human sorrow;
Her far gaze searches o'er the mighty waters

To where Fate's deeper mystery broods and shadows;
All lies before, but yet beyond her vision.
Hid is the will of Zeus, the craft of Cheiron,
The faith of Peleus; and that mortal marriage,
With all its sorrowful, lamenting sequence,
And all the glory of the reconciler:
Veiled is the destiny that waits her coming."

Among Dexter's notes concerning *The Nymph* is an account of interviews with Oliver Wendell Holmes and Longfellow, who called to see the statue. Holmes undertook to criticise it from an anatomical point of view, and showed a bit of his irresistible humor in stating the exact age of *The Nymph* in years and months. But here is the note just as I find it: —

"Dr. O. W. Holmes called. I showed him the busts first. He was very quick to recognize the likenesses. Then I uncovered the statue; he sat and looked in silence; after some five minutes he said, 'A girl; a Yankee girl; fourteen years old and seven months; the face is a portrait; it is a nymph; a girl upon the beach; it is not a Grecian nymph, for the face is not Grecian.'

"I saw where he was; thus far I had said nothing, but then I explained to him my idea and asked him to be free and say anything that occurred to him in the way of criticism. He drew my attention to the right breast of the figure, to the fold between the breast and arm; to the direction of the second toe from the third; to the muscle of the right shoulder; and he criticised these points a little, but would not say decidedly that they were not right. The back he thought was very good; the vertebræ well marked, and the figure as a whole remarkably chaste, beautiful and graceful. I felt convinced that he was right in his criticism, and the next day changed the points on

the figure that he had indicated, and by a few minutes' work the face was altered to a Grecian type.

"The next day Longfellow called to see the statue. He knew what he was to see, and so his visit was different from that of Dr. Holmes. Longfellow thought the face was Grecian, sufficiently so to answer to the name of Thetis. I was exceedingly pleased with the changes I had made in the face, although I said nothing to him in reference to them. He made some half-way criticisms and then withdrew them; evidently tried to find something that he could say was not right, but had to give it up and fell into the mood of admiration. He said the figure was graceful and remarkable for chasteness of attitude.

"Professor Sophocles called also to see the statue. He said it was a Venus just come up out of the sea; a young woman about eighteen; he thought the figure embodied perfect innocence; he did not suggest anything to change — thought, if attempted, it would be more liable to injure than improve."

It is pleasant to think Dexter was much appreciated, while he lived, by the Boston and Cambridge public. Self-made men have a certain advantage over those who have gone through regular courses in the interest they excite. Yet self-made is too often a brag, a cover for essential mediocrity, as we observe sometimes in the career of public men. But the true self-made is the only self of real value. This consists, as in the case of Dexter, of an early ideal and an industrious, unfaltering pursuit of it to the end of life. He tried to perfect himself in his several occupations from boyhood to old age. He broadened himself by study, by travel, by constant use of his pen in setting down his observations and speculations; and his higher moods found frequent expression in verse. This was the

self he made out of the being God had given him, and the aids and, I may add, the hindrances of fortune and environment. His example is worth more than all the art in the world. Knowing him as I did, and as I have tried to picture him, I hold the man dearer and more illustrious than any of his works. If the same be not confessed of all the celebrated, their fame is of little worth. Let me know the man behind his work, said Goethe.

Knowing him thus, one admires the farm boy, the blacksmith, as much as the sculptor. None of his talents was cultivated at the expense of another, or at the sacrifice of any of the common duties of home and citizenship. His artistic temperament was well balanced by many conservative instincts and by saving common-sense. Very striking in him was the absence of the current outbreaks of radicalism, and he had no taste for clubs, for wine or Vagabondia. He went to the church of his choice regularly, and accepted most of its tenets. He was reverent toward all forms of religion, and observant of good in men rather than the evil. As he appealed to the best in human nature, he found it. Consequently his usual mood was joyous and hopeful. He loved conversation and congenial companionship. You could express no sentiment or idea too elevated for his sympathy. He listened to the outbursts of youthful exuberance with admiration, and he could on occasion outstrip us all in the far flights of fancy and speculation. Glad was I, for one, to find him ignorant of most of the things taught at Cambridge. He sometimes regretted this, being unconscious of the charm of his own natural genius, so free from the incubus of collegiate learning, which often makes men only the more narrow and unintelligent.

There are many things it is better not to know. Nor can there be much regret that the artist found few opportunities for ideal marbles, seeing that hitherto such works have been but another name for imitation of classic models, — imitation of the inimitable and of divinities in whom we no longer believe. Just what would be the results of an endeavor to put into sculpture our American beliefs, our costumes, our historic or romantic events, and whatever in our national life is essentially characteristic, it will be time to determine when it is attempted. But the portrait-busts left by Dexter I foresee will be sometime of more value as a record of the period in which he lived, and of contemporary men, than any ideal statuary. And if ever the time comes when the gulf between the so-called fine and useful arts shall be abridged, beauty and utility become one and the same, then it may be that Dexter's axes, so conscientiously and proudly made, or his shoe-knives with a razor-edge, will be remembered and seen to be as beautiful as his best statue.

V

THE CLOSING YEARS

“**I**N going from one room to another there is a point in the doorway where we are not conscious of either room.” This is a sentence from the artist’s philosophical speculations regarding the passage from life to death. I use it to illustrate the continuity of his labors as he descended from middle life to old age, where the long past merged gently and unconsciously into the few remaining years. He labored on, happy in memory, comfortable in his outward life, and much pleased with a new home, which in 1878 he had made in Cambridge, not far from the University grounds. But he still kept his studio in Cambridgeport, where he worked every day as usual. The exertion of walking back and forth was perhaps too much for his strength. It was hard for him to realize that he was not as vigorous as ever. In his old studio old voices communed with him, spirits of the past attended him, and the forms he had wrought out in anguish or joy looked down upon him from his gallery. There he was at home; its silence was soothing, its labor, from long habit, necessary and grateful. He was fortunate in being able to finish his very last order, a bust of a Mr. Taylor of Boston. He was lately deceased, and Dexter worked from photographs.

When his day's work was done, he enjoyed receiving and making calls; and all who knew him delighted in his society. In the Centennial year, 1876, he had applied for space to exhibit specimens of his work at the Philadelphia Exposition; but, his health beginning to fail, he found it impossible to attend to the necessary details, and abandoned the project. His illness was long and at times painful, preventing him from his customary labors and duties for many months; but through it all he was cheered and sustained by the sympathy of friends, and the faithful attention of his wife, who survived him, and was untiring in her devotion to him in his later years and through his long illness.

His love of his country, which was one of his strongest and steadiest traits, made him deeply interested in the Centennial Celebration. He could not expatriate himself at a time when other lovers of art thought it was the price to be paid for opportunities and success. It was therefore a great disappointment when he found himself unable to exhibit at Philadelphia that which represented the work of an American sculptor in his native land. For some time before the Exposition, in the intervals when released from the extreme sufferings of his disease, he amused himself in writing a Centennial poem. It consists of about twelve hundred lines descriptive of the gathering of all the nations, — Europe, Asia and Africa, — with their products, their animals, even to the smallest insects, upon the coast of England, whence they sail for America. Then follows an account of the assembling of the people, and their several belongings, from every part of North and South America, and their reception at Philadelphia. The

poem is graphic in its word-painting, and really rather more prefigures in its scope and variety the Chicago Columbian Fair than the Centennial. This was his last effort with his pen. Pen and chisel were laid aside, and those hands which had never rested for sixty years were folded in eternal peace.

He died June 23, 1876, being then within three months of seventy years of age. He left no unfinished works in marble. His metaphysical speculations, to which I have alluded, were left incomplete, and not in a state to present to the reader. Many of their conclusions are novel and bold, and generally in conflict with the most modern scientific researches. He theorized by the light of the imagination, which often traverses reason and fact; on the other hand, it is as often prophetic of new ideas and discoveries. His rigid conservatism in politics and religion allowed itself compensation and freer play with pen and chisel. If in any way a man attains complete inward freedom, it is in the occasional hours when he feels inspired to express himself through verse. The true muse hangs no badge of sect or party on the doors she enters. She is playful, or she is serious; but her play is not wanton, nor her sobriety gloom. Both are altogether wholesome and elevating, and keep a man, as they did keep Dexter, always young and ingenuous in spirit. This outlet through writing poetry was his faithful companion and playmate throughout his arduous and laborious life, giving him moments of true pleasure and repose.

Look into his studio and observe the sculptor in his dusty smock and paper cap, weary with hours of chiselling; he stops, puts his tools on the block, goes to his little

table, where are always paper and pencil, and rests and refreshes himself with a verse, or an added page to his philosophy. At the end of the day go home with him; there he is full of talk and geniality, is gay with the gay, thinks with thinkers, is fond of children and his garden, admires beautiful women and noble natures. This was the man.

And here transcribing one of his later poems, which seems to be the impassioned expression of a soul whose view of the great Spirit of the universe becomes nearer and clearer as it is about to take its farewell of earthly things and endeavors to give utterance to an inexpressible theme, I leave him to the contemplation of the reader.

God! my spirit calleth to its cause;
Soul! as that is which in me
In its spirit seeketh thee;
Yet not the word but conscious laws.

Word? What word can e'er my spirit lead?
What the drop can ever show
Kindred drop by which to know
God, that source from which we all proceed?

That which God is, language ever veils;
Line on line, fold over fold,
Ever telling, never told;
In vain, in vain; no tongue reveals.

God! Then sounds deep the soul-struck lyre
Stringed with human nerve and heart;
Yet then only can impart
Some spark from that celestial fire.

Nay, touched of God his spirit speaks,
Grants us now responsive sound
Though all human tongues confound —
Blest! Supreme! feels the thought it seeks.

CATALOGUE OF THE WORKS
OF
HENRY DEXTER, SCULPTOR

Arranged in the order of their execution. When marked by an asterisk it signifies that the works were carried into marble.

1. 1835. The first essay in clay, bust of F. W. Lane of Boston.
2. 1836. Bust of Col. Samuel Swett of Boston.* Library at Newburyport, Mass.
3. 1836. Bust of Rev. Hubbard Winslow of Boston.
4. 1836. Bust of Peter Harvey, Esq. Boston.
5. 1836. Bust of Rev. Mr. Newell. Boston.
6. 1836. Bust of William Ward, Esq. Boston.
7. 1837. Bust of Rev. Dr. Rufus Anderson.
8. 1837. Bust of Hon. Samuel A. Eliot.* Boston. Family.
9. 1837. Bust of Dr. Winslow Lewis. Boston.
10. 1837. Bust of Mrs. Winslow Lewis. Boston.
11. 1837. Bust of Judge Jackson. Brookline.
12. 1838. Bust of Miss Rogers. Portland, Maine.
13. 1838. Bust of Dr. Solomon Keep. Boston.
14. 1838. Bust of Rev. E. M. Magoun.
15. 1838. Bust of Miss Ellen Tree.* Colonel Perkins.
16. 1839. Statue of Miss Emily Binney, known as "The Binney Child."* Mount Auburn.
17. 1839. Bust of Miss Harriet J. Dexter, daughter of the sculptor.
18. 1840. Bust of Dr. Ingalls. Boston.
19. 1840. Bust of Miss Anna E. Dexter, youngest daughter of the sculptor.

20. 1840. Bust of Mrs. Alvan Clark. Cambridge.
21. 1840. Bust of the sculptor's mother.
22. 1840. Bust of Gov. Marcus Morton.
23. 1840. Bust of B. B. Thatcher. Boston.
24. 1840. Bust of William Andrews, actor.
25. 1840. Bust of — Finn, actor.
26. 1841. Bust of Gov. John Davis.* Boston Athenæum.
27. 1841. Bust of Thomas B. Curtis.* Boston. Family.
28. 1841. Painting. The Artist's Daughters.
29. 1841. Bust of William Loring.* Boston. Family.
30. 1841. Bust of Miss Caroline Dexter.
31. 1842. Bust of Charles Dickens.
32. 1842. Bust of Jonas Chickering.* Boston. Family.
33. 1842. Statue of Miss E. Winchester.* Family.
34. 1842. Bust of Francis C. Gray.* Boston.
35. 1842. Model of a hand of Miss Anna E. Dexter.*
36. 1842. Bust of Hon. Theodore Lyman.* Family. Also duplicated for the Horticultural Society and the Farm School at Westborough.
37. 1842. Bust of Gov. S. S. Armstrong.* Family.
38. 1843. Bust of Miss Eunice Richardson. Salem.
39. 1843. Study of a foot.
40. 1843. Bust of Mr. Charles Lincoln. Charlestown. Warden of the State Prison.
41. 1843. Bust of Commodore Alexander Mackenzie.* New York. Boston Athenæum.
42. 1843. Bust of John D. Williams.* Boston. Duplicated in marble four times.
43. 1843. Bust of a baby. Mrs. Eaton. Cambridge.
44. 1843. Bust of Miss Charlotte Nichols. Cambridge.
45. 1844. Bust of William Lawrence.* Family.
46. 1844. Bust of Jencks Dexter. Kansas.
47. 1844. Bust of Miss Mills. South Carolina.
48. 1844. Duplicate bust of Amos Lawrence.*
49. 1844. Bust of Samuel P. Allen.* Cambridge. Family.
50. 1844. Bust of Tasker Swett.* Boston. Family.
51. 1845. Bust of Miss Sophia Studley. Cambridge.

52. 1845. Bust of a child.* Cambridge. S. P. Allen.
53. 1845. Statue. Mary Magdalene.
54. 1845. Model of a hand of Miss Harriet Dexter.
55. 1846. Statuette. A study.
56. 1846. Bust of Gov. Briggs.* Pittsfield, Mass. Family.
57. 1846. Bust of Hon. John Pickering.* American Academy of Arts and Sciences.
58. 1846. Bust of a child.
59. 1846. Bust of a child of L. Stanwood.*
60. 1846. Bust of a child of N. A. Thompson.*
61. 1846. Mural monument with figure of Grief.* In church at Portolago. South Carolina.
62. 1846. Painting. The Marys at the Sepulchre.
63. 1847. The Backwoodsman.* Marble statue, heroic size. Wellesley College.
64. 1847. Bust of Edmund Dwight.* Mrs. Parkman.
65. 1847. Bust of Alexander Hamilton.* Boston.
66. 1847. Bust of John Chase.* Chicopee.
67. 1848. Statue. The First Lesson.* Portrait-statue of a daughter of John P. Cushing. Watertown.
68. 1848. Boy and Squirrel.* Portrait-statue of a son of John P. Cushing. Watertown.
69. 1849. Bust of John G. Cushing.*
70. 1849. Bust of Robert M. Cushing.*
71. 1849. Bust of Thomas F. Cushing.*
72. 1849. Bust of Marie Louisa Cushing.*
73. 1850. Portrait of Charles Valentine. Cambridge. The last painting executed by the sculptor.
74. 1850. Bust of William Hayward.* Charleston, S. C.
75. 1850. Bust of a child.* E. D. Goodrich. Cambridge.
76. 1850. Bust of Mrs. S. P. Allen.* Cambridge.
77. 1851. Statue of Frank Gardner.* Mount Auburn.
78. 1851. Bust of Hon. William Appleton.* Boston.
79. 1852. Bust of Dr. John C. Warren.* Boston.
80. 1852. Bust of Dr. John C. Warren.* Duplicated in marble.
81. 1852. Bust of Robert G. Shaw.* Boston.
82. 1852. Bust of Robert G. Shaw.* Duplicated in marble.

83. 1852. Bust of Hon. John C. Gray.* Boston.
84. 1852. Bust of the late Hon. William Gray.* "Billy Gray"
taken from a portrait.
85. 1852. Bust of Mr. Crowninshield.
86. 1852. Bust of Miss Caroline F. Orne. Cambridge.
87. 1853. Bust of Charles M. Hovey.* Cambridge.
88. 1853. Bust of Mrs. Charles M. Hovey.* Cambridge.
89. 1853. Bust of Mr. Williams.* Boston.
90. 1853. The Mountfort Monument.* At Mount Auburn.
91. 1853. Statue. The Yankee Boy.
92. 1854. Bust of Frederic Tudor.* Historical Society. Boston.
93. 1854. Bust of Hon. Isaac Livermore.* Cambridge.
94. 1854. Bust of Rev. Dr. Walker.* President of Harvard College,
Cambridge. College Library.
95. 1854. Bust of Hon. Anson Burlingame. Cambridge.
96. 1854. Bust of George Livermore, Esq. Cambridge.
97. 1854. Statue of a dog. Cut in freestone. Forest Hills Ceme-
tery.
98. 1854. Bust of Miss Mountfort.* New Orleans.
99. 1854. Bust of a child.* Mr. Leeda.
100. 1854. Bust of a daughter of William Mason.* Taunton.
101. 1854. Bust of Hon. Robert C. Winthrop.* Boston Historical
Society.
102. 1855. Bust of Miss Folsom.* Cambridge.
103. 1855. Bust of — Williston.* East Hampton. Amherst
College.
104. 1856. Bust of Dr. Jacob Bigelow.* Boston. Massachusetts
General Hospital.
105. 1856. Medallion Head of Samuel Appleton.* King's Chapel.
Boston.
106. 1857. Study for the statue of General Warren.
107. 1857. Study for the statue of General Warren.
108. 1857. Statue of Gen. Joseph Warren.* Bunker Hill. Charles-
town.
109. 1857. Bust of Francis Batchelder, Esq.* Cambridge.
110. 1857. Duplicate marble bust of Edward Everett.* After
Powers.

111. 1858. Bust of Hon. Alexander H. Rice.* Boston.
112. 1858. Bust of Isaac F. Shepard. Boston.
113. 1858. Bust of Hon. Henry Wilson.*
114. 1858. Design for a Pediment for one of the public buildings at Washington. Representing the Settlement of America.
115. 1859. Bust of James Buchanan.* President of the United States. Family. Wheatland.
116. 1859. Duplicate of Buchanan.*
117. 1859. Bust of Governor Buckingham.* Connecticut.
118. " " " " Goodwin.* New Hampshire.
119. " " " " Turner. Rhode Island.
120. " " " " Hall. Vermont.
121. " " " " Morgan.* New York.
122. " " " " Morrill. Maine.
123. " " " " Chase. Ohio.
124. " " " " Magoffin.* Kentucky.
125. " " " " Harris. Tennessee.
126. " " " " Ellis.* North Carolina.
127. " " " " Gist. South Carolina.
128. " " " " Brown. Georgia.
129. " " " " Perry. Florida.
130. " " " " Moor. Alabama.
131. " " " " Pettus. Mississippi.
132. " " " " Wickliffe. Louisiana.
133. " " " " Houston. Texas.
134. " " " " Conway. Arkansas.
135. 1860 " " " " Stewart. Missouri.
136. " " " " Bissell. Illinois.
137. " " " " Lowe. Iowa.
138. " " " " Sibley. Minnesota.
139. " " " " Randall. Wisconsin.
140. " " " " Wisner. Michigan.
141. " " " " Willard. Indiana.
142. " " " " Packer. Pennsylvania.
143. " " " " Burton. Delaware.
144. " " " " Newell. New Jersey.
145. " " " " Hicks. Maryland.

146. 1860. Bust of Governor Wise. Virginia.
147. " " " " Banks. Massachusetts.
148. 1861. Bust of a lady.
149. 1861. Bust of Alvin Adams, Esq.* Watertown.
150. 1861. Bust of Judge Putnam.* Roxbury.
151. 1861. Duplicate of Judge Putnam.*
152. 1862. Bust of Prof. C. C. Felton.* Harvard University
Library. Cambridge.
153. 1862. Duplicate Prof. C. C. Felton,* for Samuel Felton. Philadelphia.
154. 1862. Duplicate bust of William Appleton.*
155. 1862. Bust of Hon. Marshall P. Wilder.* Horticultural Hall.
Boston.
156. 1862. Duplicate bust of Hon. John Pickering.*
157. 1863. Duplicate bust of Hon. Edward Everett.* Philadelphia.
158. 1863. Bust of Josiah Stickney.* Watertown. Horticultural
Hall. Boston.
159. 1863. Bust of Rev. Hubbard Winslow.* New York.
160. 1863. Bust of Mrs. Percival L. Everett.* Boston.
161. 1864. Bust of " Little Anna."* Mrs. James W. Mason.
162. 1865. Bust of E. K. Mudge, Esq.* St. Stephens Church, Lynn.
163. 1865. Bust of James L. Little.* Boston.
164. 1865. Bust of Mrs. James L. Little.* Boston.
165. 1865. Bust of Moses Williams.* Boston.
166. 1865. Bust of a child.
167. 1866. Bust of Hon. George C. Richardson.* Boston.
168. 1866. Bust of Mrs. George C. Richardson.* Boston.
169. 1866. Bust of Nathaniel Thayer.* Library, Lancaster, Mass.
170. 1866. Bust of Charles L. Harding.* Cambridge.
171. 1866. Bust of Mrs. Charles L. Harding.* Cambridge.
172. 1866. Bust of Edgar Harding.* Cambridge.
173. 1866. Bust of " Little Addie."* Mrs. Robert Douglass. Cam-
bridge.
174. 1867. Bust of Louis Agassiz.* Nathaniel Thayer. Boston.
175. 1867. Bust of Arthur Wilkinson.* Cambridge.
176. 1867. Bust of Aaron Williams.* Roxbury. Savings Bank.
Highland District.

177. 1867. Bust of Professor Beck.* Cambridge.
178. 1867. Bust of Master Charles Möring.* Cambridge.
179. 1868. Bust of Hon. Joel Parker.* Cambridge.
180. 1868. Bust of Henry W. Longfellow.* Cambridge. Library,
Lancaster, Mass.
181. 1868. Bust of Aaron B. Magoun.* Harvard Grammar School.
Cambridge.
182. 1868. Bust of Caleb Wood.* Cambridge.
183. 1869. Bust of Rev. Dr. C. W. Peabody.* Springfield, Mass.
184. 1869. Duplicate of H. W. Longfellow.* New York.
185. 1869. Bust of Rev. Dr. Lothrop.* Boston.
186. 1869. Bust of Hon. Samuel Hooper.* Boston.
187. 1869. Bust of Chief-Justice Chase.* Boston.
188. 1870. Duplicate bust of Nathaniel Thayer.* Boston.
189. 1870. Bust of General Thompson.* Warren Academy.
Woburn.
190. 1870. Study for head of the Nymph.
191. 1870. Statue of the Nymph of the Ocean. Wellesley College.
192. 1871. Medallion of head of Alvin Adams.* Watertown. Mrs.
Waldo Adams. Boston.
193. 1871. Bust of A. K. P. Welch.* Cambridge.
194. 1871. Duplicate bust of Gen. Theodore Lyman.* Lyman
School. Boston.
195. Bust of Rev. Dr. Blagden.* Boston. Old South
Church.
196. Bust of Rev. Dr. Kirk.* Boston. Mt. Vernon Church.
197. Bust of Dr. Andrew Peabody.* Cambridge.
198. Bust of A. A. Lawrence.* Longwood.
199. Bust of Mr. Taylor * of the firm of Hogg, Brown, and
Taylor, Boston. This was his last work.

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